'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH'

The Poetry Review

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CONTENTS

*

Prelude: Farewell to Culture 67
Easter 1956, Margaret Sheppard Fidler 70
Soliloquy in a London Square, F. Pratt Green 71
They Work Who Dream, Kennedy Williamson 72
Richard Burton as 'Henry V', Stephanie Boyd 72
Russia, Stephen Graham 73
Four Poems, Louis Golding 74
Tin Whistle, Dorothy Una Ratcliffe 76
The Snipe's Love Flight, Wilfrid Gibson 76
The Hills, D. H. Poole 77
Symbols, Ronald D. Mann 77
Miniatures, Lady Margaret Sackville 78
Rainbow Trout, Edwin Orlando 80
The Swan, B. A. Killeen 80
The Aboriginal, Imogen Whyse 81
Sleep and Dream, Edith M. Walker 83
White Heron, Grace Porterfield Polk 84
Crucifixion with A Lamp and A Mirror, Elisabeth Ayrton 84
The Beleaguered Heart: The Poetry of P. D. Cummins, Melville Chaning-Pearce 85
Caprice, Irma Simnett 87
I Mourned My Love, Gila Uriel 88
Our Apple Tree Blossoms, Pamela Melnikoff 88
For Barbara, James Harrison 89
Softly Call, Marjorie S. Dyer 89
How Like December, K. M. Turner 89
Zosia, Jack Lindsay 90
The Last Angel, Gwyneth Anderson 92
Dragonfly Moment, Winifred Kingdon-Ward 92
A Memorial, Engraved in Writing, Margaret Stanley-Wrench 93
Modern Poetry And Metaphysics, Stuart Holroyd 94

Anacreontics, Kenneth Hare 98
Poets?, Paul Selver 98
Spectacles, Alexander Buist 99
Coward at Heart, M. Shand Smith 99
'Dear Editors –', P. G. Smith, Terence Heywood, Marguerite J. Deane 100
The Proud Princess of Vix, M. E. Mason 101
This Heart That Broke So Long . . ., Kathleen Valmai Richardson 102
Stoic and Epicure, Robert Armstrong 103
The Return of Arthur, Herbert Palmer 104
Wit and Lyrist, William Kean Seymour 104
Wales and France, Arthur Vivian 106
Trio And Tailpiece, Geoffrey Johnson 107
Strenuous Exercise, Kennedy Williamson 108
Old And New Voices, F. Pratt Green 108
Idiomatic, Evelyn Bangay 109
'Wing Your Joy!', Shorter Notices 110
Poetry Society Special – Annual Luncheon 113
Competitions for Everybody 114
Last Lines, Palgrave Q. Dobree 117
Latest Prize Reports and Awards 119
Friday Evenings at Portman Square 122
Portman Square – When Icicles Hang 122
Work in Progress at the Centres 124
Annual Meeting 128

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Next Issue:

PHOEBE HESKETH

LORD DUNSANY

SIR FRANCIS MEYNELL

'Memories of my Mother'

Prizes for Everybody
and a Surprise Feature

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: IF YOU CAN BUY THE BOOKS THAT ARE PUBLISHED BY OUR ADVERTISERS YOU WILL BE GIVING HELP ALL ROUND

TO OUR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

*

IN YOUR OWN INTEREST READ CAREFULLY –

1. **No manuscripts can be considered** which have not the name and address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. **A self-addressed stamped envelope** must always be enclosed or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
3. One side only of the paper must be used: typescript is preferred.
4. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
5. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
6. Poems over thirty lines in length have a doubtful chance of acceptance.
7. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

THESE PAGES – AN OFFERING TO

Archibald MacLeish

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs –

Prelude: FAREWELL TO CULTURE?

First the Blade . . . then the Corn and the Harvest. First the young people, then the mature poetry-lovers. How vitally urgent it is that the knowledge and love of Poetry should be regarded as the birthright of every boy and girl was shown all too clearly – in an obverse way, of course – by the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, when he advocated the preparation for engineering and similar life-careers at the earliest possible age as the principal duty in every kind of school.

Such counsel disturbs us. As it stands it is dangerously one-sided.

Farewell to Culture? The dictionary meaning of culture is 'training or discipline by which man's moral and intellectual nature is elevated.' Surely, with due respects to political leadership, it is this 'training or discipline' that must surmount all other education, and as Captain C. B. Fry emphasized during a memorable lecture to The Poetry Society, the young mind is able to accept it years before it can grasp the technicalities of a precision-machine. Early cultivation of the Arts may lead to refinement and gracious living: knowing the structure of a guided (or misguided) missile never will.

If the ideal of Britain's future 'civilisation' is materialistic, inclining to the Robot's way of life, then the ever-deepening necessity of Poetry becomes apparent, and so does the first importance of the organized movements which foster the youthful regard for it. Through *The Voice of Youth*, a quarterly magazine for young people, The Poetry Society is now making one of its persistent reminders that man (and the child who is father to him) cannot live by bread alone. This year *The Voice of Youth* has set out with a mammoth number and a new appearance (114 pages, 1s. 6d. only!), astonishing evidence of the ever-increasing vogue of verse-elocution in schools throughout the land. Dare we answer, therefore, that the Farewell to Culture is deferred *sine die* – and that we are confident it will never be spoken?

*

'I am a poet, and I find it very difficult to read fiction . . . I like books about my betters, people who are nice-looking, who are richer than I am, who have nicer food, and are clever.'

What is all that? Adolescent stuff, servant-girl stuff? Guess either, and you are wrong. It is a quotation from a broadcast on Dostoevsky by an *American*, in his fiftieth year, immediately after he was elected as the new Professor of Poetry at an *English* University . . . One who has called Tennyson 'stupid' . . .

It is to another American that we turn as we add a fifteenth name to the

golden scroll of poets who are able to look back on a long life devoted to their vocation. By 'dedicating' this number (*see page 67*) to Archibald MacLeish we honour the author of *Conquistidor,* for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Poetry Prize in the nineteen-twenties. A majority of his publications have been books of poetry – and a recent title of his indicates the spirit of them: 'Freedom is the right to choose.'

In a speech at the University of Chicago Mr. MacLeish asked: Why do poets, generation after generation, time out of mind, repeat 'The sea is beautiful, women are beautiful, the sun is beautiful?' Because for each man it is new? No. Because for all men it is old. Because the loveliness, the poetry, is in the commonness, the recognition. Because it is the love, the wonder, that is poetry and not the object of the love or wonder. Generation after generation, poetry has kept this record of the hearts of men.

*

Our Annual Luncheon again: Please turn to Page 113. Urgent.

*

With a last salute we turn to another Pulitzer Prize winner, Leonora Speyer, who has died in New York at the age of 83, not long after the passing of another American poet, Robert Tristram Coffin. Daughter of a German business-man she married a British banker who was knighted but gave up his title on becoming an American citizen. Mrs. Speyer, like R. T. Coffin, was known to many over here through *The Best Poems of the Year* anthologies.

Leonora Speyer attended the American Poetry Society's annual dinner a year ago, and it must have been one of her last public appearances. Amid tremendous enthusiasm, we are told, the award of the Society's Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement was bestowed by the President, Edward Davison. The citation read:

> For your lifelong dedication to the arts – to painting, literature, and music (in which as a young concert violinist, you rose to eminence); for your generous and unfailing support of creative artists in every field; for your hospitality, counsel and encouragement to poets, old and young, known and obscure, whom you inspirited throughout more than forty years of an energetic life as writer, teacher, critic; and as the wife and widow of a noted and beloved philanthropist; . . . above all, for your own outstanding attainments as an American poet –

'She made an impressive figure in an ivory moiré gown with sleeves of old Italian lace, a dazzling white fox cape draped around her shoulders. All that day, because of ill-health, she had waged a heroic battle to beat down the fear that she would be unable to attend. Few in that audience knew at what cost she came. She spoke her response in a voice charged with emotion. "It is one of the great moments in my long life. I never dreamed this would happen to me. Ten or twelve years ago I placed the same gold medal into the frail hands of our dear Edna Millay. She spoke very simply of her writing and I wish I could do the same. But I am no speechmaker . . ."'

*

Thomas Moult's choral work for orchestra and voices, *Brown Earth,* was recently performed in the B.B.C. Home Service for the eighth time since it was awarded the Carnegie Prize for a 'poem of the year' set to music. Doctor Cyril Rootham, of Cambridge University, was the composer who

shared the success, and the massed singers on many occasions have been the famous Huddersfield Choral Society

Also broadcast – twice in the Third Programme at the New Year – has been John Redwood-Anderson's verse-sequence, 'Almanac', which is to be published as a book by Macdonald this coming autumn. So will books of poetry by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe (Lane) and Phoebe Hesketh (Heinemann). *Some Phases of Love* is a new collection by Phyllis D. Cummins, whose work is the subject of an article in this issue. Louis Golding is one of the judges in a B.B.C. competition (£300) for original radio plays: his book of stories, *Mario on the Beach*, and William Kean Seymour's new novel, *Names and Faces*, are in the spring lists.

*

Two poems by Cardinal Newman, very dissimilar in their kind – 'The Dream of Gerontius' and 'Lead Kindly Light' – are written indelibly in the Golden Book of Creative Art, and although an uncommon number of birth and death anniversaries of famous men have been observed just lately (Heine, Mozart, Verhaeren, Bernard Shaw, Mickiewicz) the habitués of our Friday Poetry Hours will wish us to draw their attention to another of them, which is worthily linked with the names of the Cardinal and his composer, Sir Edward Elgar. The beauty of 'The Dream of Gerontius' was enhanced by a great baritone singer, as he is called in *The Oxford Companion to Music* – David Ffrangcon-Davies, father of Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, the distinguished actress whose share in our work for The Poetry Society has earned our heartfelt gratitude. Ffrangcon-Davies created the part of the Angel of the Agony when *The Dream of Gerontius* was set to music by Elgar, and it is just a hundred years since he was born in North Wales.

Elgar, his close friend, thought of him as a 'Celtic Dreamer,' one who saw 'the most of truth,' and Ernest Newman, the music-critic, has recalled him as 'more than a singer.' Marjorie Ffrangcon-Davies, another daughter who shared the inheritance of genius, wrote in her *Memoir* when he sang no longer: 'The hills and valleys of Wales are still as magical in their loveliness; wild roses bloom down Conway lanes and the brook still sings.'

*

Important. Have you turned to Page 113?

*

A cry from the heart goes out herewith to forgetful users of The Poetry Society's library at 33 Portman Square: Will they examine their bookshelves at home for what may be borrowed copies of T. S. Eliot's *Collected Poems* and much of Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, and others unreturned?

Such books will be recognizable by the Society's label, pasted in, and its embossed stamp. One of our Council members complains that someone unknown, for whom forgetful is not the fitting word, actually carried away two books after entering them in his (the aforesaid Councillor's) name!

*

Postscripts – Have you remembered to turn to page 113 . . . Close friend of Verhaeren, John Redwood-Anderson recalls him in the quarterly, *Adam* . . . An Exhibition of Works by Sir Alfred J. Munnings, Past-President of the Royal Academy, was held during March in the R.A. Diploma Gallery, Burlington House . . .

THE EDITORIAL BOARD.

EASTER 1956

MARGARET SHEPPARD FIDLER

God so loved the world, and saw that it was good,
And gave us Eden: and no angel stood
With sword of fire upon the gate,
Until the Devil came with fear and hate.

And God so loved the world, He saved it oftentimes,
And gave His Son to die for men, for all their crimes,
And raised Him from the tomb
That man should pass from doom.

And man has loved the world
And fashioned it to flower,
And jewelled it with stones,
And harnessed it with power,
And hallowed it with blood,
And found it to be good.

O world, belovéd well of God and man
And dearly bought with blood of Son and son,
It is not meet, though history began
With chaos, that we should consign
To Nothingness again what is Divine.

It is not meet: out of forgotten night
He fashioned birth;
And we, in that far morning heirs of light,
Inherited the Earth . . .
The atom and the burgeoning of spring:
Heirs, since creation dawned, of everything.

It is not meet: the Lord has power to raise
From death to life,
But we who sing His praise
And glory in His name at Eastertide,
Have only strength to break: Christ crucified
Is not enough of ill,
We have destruction at our fingers still.

Forbear! This is the world God made and loved
Since first His Spirit on the waters moved.

SOLILOQUY IN A LONDON SQUARE

(In honour of F.D.R.)

F. PRATT GREEN

Your statue, in its reticence of metal and stone,
Forbids gratitude. Leaning lightly on a stick,
Cloaked, you might be a Boston prophet or pilgrim

Lost in Mayfair. No compatriot
Greets you this morning. A child,
Younger than history, bounces

A coloured ball, and a man, sweeping dead leaves
Into a dustcart, tidies your shadow; to the girl
You are no more than a backcloth to her romances.

I hear you laugh into a microphone
Of the wind. You were not joyless,
Not unarmed against such ironies,

In the living legend you became. But to us, Sir,
You were a man who had conquered suffering. Often
We talked of you in a silence before the sirens.

How right to set you on a plinth
Without Lincoln's chair or even
An official roll on a verbal drum!

Your politics, I fear, were baseball to us, a game
Yankees played, and your Freedoms were the noises
With which every democrat coaxes his millenium.

I smile to myself. London sparrows
Fly down from a plane tree, hoping
You, or I, will free them from want.

And the girl wants a lover. Shall we tell her,
Before she walks on paradise grass, that freedom
Costs the earth? She listens. A homely accent

Rouses the square as a blue wave
Flows between the scarlet geraniums
And engulfs you. That lovable guy,

The boy from the Deep South, shifts his chewing-gum
To the other cheek. Your name, a delayed firework,
Explodes in the obscure spaces of his night sky.

THEY WORK WHO DREAM

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

The vast cathedral, now sublimely wrought,
Was once a vision in a builder's heart.
The sculpture that enthrals us with its art
Once had its being as a misty thought.

The poem that has shape in word and line
Was formless once within the poet's soul.
The journey's end that is the pilgrim's goal
Was first seen dimly at an inner shrine.

The beacon light was once an inward gleam,
Discovery a glimmer in the brain.
Give honour to the heroes who attain,
But Heaven give us heroes who can dream!

RICHARD BURTON AS 'HENRY V'

STEPHANIE BOYD

Like steady snowflakes easing into place,
One after one on thousands in my mind,
His words have muffled up reality
And cloaked the usual with difference,
Subtly and fast. How soon the magic works!
For here's a man can conjure with our hearts
To make us feel what few experience –
The weight of crowns, the curse of stateliness
And palaced sorrows. With each traitor here
I give moist answer to his questioning,
Quiver with fancied shame, but after theirs
Live to die other deaths – Falstaff's, the boy's:
This last that first lets savagery leap out
In the Welsh eyes of Welsh-pretended king;
Flashes of double-barrelled cobalt fire
Angrily scorch the unoffending air
Which that poor boy will never use again.
Yet if there's fury, there is more of strength.
The wave of majesty he rides above
Douses the sudden blaze and lifts us all

In crests of greatness on to Agincourt.
His eyes sing Glorias. His spirit shines
Brighter than any spotlit coat-of-mail.
Time and again, the subject audience
Does fealty, accepting as its king
This present player of the worded past.
And yet, at last, a woman, I rebel
Against the envied role of royalty –
Not his, but Katherine's: that I would usurp
Not to gain more advantages than this,
The one and only opportunity –
First, to be offered such a sovereign-lord;
Then, to learn such an actor's sorcery.

RUSSIA

STEPHEN GRAHAM

You have always said you had time,
All the time in the world.
While we in the West, in our unrest
Wished all to happen ere we grew old;
We wished to see with our own eyes
The coming of the new light
Out of the East –

For us it is a drama
In which the fifth act
Should illuminate and justify
All that has gone before.
The final curtain should descend
On perfect peace and mankind reconciled,
With some politician now living
Speaking the epilogue.

'It must happen in our time'
'It must happen in our time'
'It must happen in our time'
Said the German, the Briton, and the American,
'We have got to get it all straight *Now*'.
But the Russian said, 'Your *Now* fades as you speak.
Our *Now* is coming. It is in the Future.
We have plenty of time!'

FOUR POEMS

LOUIS GOLDING

TOO MUCH BEAUTY, WORLD

Too much beauty, world! How can frail eyes
  Endure the lances of the sinking sun;
Nor the no less poignant barbs of those
  Swift stars whose fluent poison sears the bone?

Miserable ears, whose drums the gong of wind
  Assaults, and when this fails, then birds fail not
To fray that threadbare texture with such sound
  As saps firm oak-trees even, at the root.

Do not too rashly open the fern-fronds
  By mossy wells nor bracken on high heaths.
I have known hair so cool that my scorched hands
  Fluttered down its flame like silly moths.

Too much beauty, world! Have ruth on us,
  Bound on the fierce gyration of thy wheel!
We are no more than the bleak shell of a house
  Rocked by the winds until the last stone fall.

Naught then but Death to wait for. His strong mail
  Holds us immune from Beauty at the last.
Yet not too surely. Though sealed from the sun's toil
  What of the stirrings in the germinal dust?

Who knows relentless Beauty hath surcease
  – Woe's us, sad creatures! – even in Death's demesnes?
Where are her shafts not potent? Who can guess
  Her wild confusions in our obscure bones?

CALM LADY

She is a lady of such gravity
Her words are verses when she utters them.
And when she lifts her arms about her hair
Her arms are sculpture and they stiffen there.

In movement, even, she is motionless
As certain statues move though they stand still.
So the swift gull is nailed upon the air,
So Nike swoops down from her pallid stair.

Thus she resolves the timeless paradox
Being of time and being outside time.
No lady of this day's so debonair
– Yet she's a queen, as Eve and Helen were.

GREECE REMEMBERED

So still this land is, so austere,
  Where the dead Greek youth went,
That a man might think it were
  Their sculptured monument.

Yet even in space, yet even in time,
  Like a moon-outlined leaf,
A perfect phrase in a lost chime –
  It was so brief, so brief.

The marble hills stand in the seas,
  The minute seas curl under them:
Even as if Praxiteles
  Had carved it on a gem.

TYRANNIES

He is so palsied by his dreams,
  This tall and beautiful, this pitiful man,
He, when a moth-wing taps him, screams.
  When a gull's image ran
Over the blue wide shallows, he
  Wrung hands and cried 'The Kraken! Help!
Help me, good stranger, lest I be
  Pulped wrack afloat with spume and kelp!'

O but break free from those wild wheels
  That drag you bruised by crag and scar!
Stand for staunch earth on dogged heels,
  Knowing what thing you are;
How the whole leaguered oak-forest
  Is not so strong as your least bone,
And the plumed pride of the sea's crest
  Bows mute before your own!

Speak – and you utter rocks and trees!
  Move – and sea ebbs and forest flies!
How then shall shadows tyrannize
  The tyrant of their substances?

TIN WHISTLE

DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE

(for A.C.P.)

Plaintive was the music of the little whistle,
Played beside the dark rocks, high above the sea,
Tinted like a harebell, veiled in misted sunlight;
Pipe again the plaintive lilt that there you piped for me,

Whilst a hidden rivulet tumbled with a tinkle,
Under ivy trellises, where polypodies hide,
Beside the steep and stony track leading to the shore:
Pipe again the plaintive lilt and I'll hear the running tide.

Islands like blue petals stud the dim horizon,
Snowy-breasted birds plane where men are free and kind,
Where life floweth slowly and ebbeth like the ocean:
Pipe again the plaintive lilt and I'll feel the off-shore wind.

THE SNIPE'S LOVE FLIGHT

WILFRID GIBSON

Now, flying over fells in evening light,
The curlew's pipe
Sounds thrilling, call on call; also, the snipe
Above his nested mate, exultantly,
Wheels in love's sunset-flight –

Wheels in wide looping circles through the blue
Clear sky a-wing,
Soaring and dipping and recovering,
With tail-plumes drumming, as he earthward dives,
Only to soar anew,

As if the rapture of his heart, unspent,
Fired him to fare
Circling for ever through the glittering air
For her delight, who watches from the nest
Safe-hidden in deep bent:

And, only when the last reluctant light
Fades from the sky,
Does he close his swift wings, and, silently,
Run through the grass to where his eager mate
Awaits him in the night.

THE HILLS

D. H. POOLE

On craggy knees, the lonely hills extend,
Ridge upon ridge, grey, without end,
To the blue haze of the distant sky;
Silent, their native force long spent,
In sleep they lie.

At summer's height, the lordly sun
Beamed down on the leaping streams that run
Full and cool to the valley floor,
And the long-drawn day could scarcely come
To night once more.

Then trees where the foam-white waters fall
Were clothed in splendour, one and all,
And the bare outcrop, strong-lit with love
Leaned out, suspended from the bulging wall,
A thousand feet above.

But autumn comes, and slowly through the land
The misty fingers move, a creeping hand,
At the close of the turning year:
Proud and apart the summits stand,
No longer near.

SYMBOLS

RONALD D. MANN

I watched them walk into the woods,
With pine trees black and high,
And saw them moving through the haze
And the primrose sky.

I wondered what it meant that they
Should walk among the hills,
And laugh into the shimmered air
That the bird-song fills.

I wondered if it meant that they
Were golden-shouldered signs,
Of all the purpose of the hills,
And the waiting pines.

MINIATURES

LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE

THE MOMENT

A sudden rush of glory fills the air
With golden music, after long delay:
Pass not into the silence, O! most rare
Moment of joy, which knows not yesterday –

OASIS

Deny me not this moment's brief delay,
This green oasis on a dusty way,
Who knows what fruit from lightly scattered seed
Of song may ripen for some Traveller's need?

THE CHRYSALIS

Most like a chrysalis, the Poet brings
To birth a living rhapsody of wings –
Who knows from what grey strands of painful thought
These iridescent shining webs were wrought?

PROMISED LAND

Weary, upon a high-flung rock I stand
My gaze turned Eastward toward the Promised Land,
And, hesitating, now that I have come
So near the shining frontier – weep for home.

EAST WIND

An overbearing wind blows from the East.
There's no defence; the helpless flowers despair;
And, hungry still, we guests at Summer's Feast,
Don air-accustomed rags and homeward fare –

PASSION-FLOWERS

Stranger whose pious hands have decked this stone
With Passion-flowers for one who lies unknown,
Wherefore? – 'I knew her not in life but guessed
The secret longing that disturbs her rest.'

GRATIAS

A shop fresh painted; tulips; a gay toy;
Sun-gilded roofs; balloons; a smiling face;
Pigeons; – all these, the petty cash of joy,
Are things for which my thankful heart says grace –

FRUSTRATION

How shall these mortal roses make amends
For the lost grace of one immortal flower? –
This song which like a flaming rose descends
To my closed lips has perished in an hour.

JOURNEY'S END

Remind me not of ancient toils – No more
Shall my frail ship, her puny sails unfurled,
Seek the adventure of an unknown shore: –
This heart's small compass can embrace the World.

SUN-RISE

When day's victorious banners first unfold
Bright with the gleam of resurrected gold,
Those fledgling hopes which lapped in darkness lie
Like birds released, rush hurtling towards the sky.

ROSEMARY

For an Airman's grave written by request

Brave flower of memory, defying death,
Breathe resurrection with your fragrant breath,
And you, beloved falcon of the sky,
Fold your bright wings which rest but cannot die.

ENCOUNTER

I met a doleful lady yesterday,
Her eyes distraught, her beauty wept away –
I asked her name: – 'Twas Summer racked with cold
Begging the Sun for one small coin of gold.

RAINBOW TROUT

EDWIN ORLANDO

Those laboured movements on the bank,
That creeping through tamboukie rank,
The patient hours our first fish took –
Are things not mentioned in the angler's book.

The fear that you might be seen,
The danger when you overlean
Of plunging in the gurgling brook
Are things not mentioned in the angler's book.

That tangle of a knotted line
At the most crucial time,
That wrench to loose the – hook,
Are things not mentioned in the angler's book.

And the fact that in this crystal pool
The trout you're after is no fool,
Are matters which you overlook
First reading through your angler's book.

THE SWAN

B. A. KILLEEN

Under a dark design of branches
broods the deceptive water;
a black and smooth dimension,
sleek and still.

And then a swan,
like a fresh and divine idea
entering the long-awaiting mind,
slides her white curve
along a silent shadow,
steering a confident course:
the motion wounds and heals at once,
disturbs and disappears.

Soon gone, she is not forgotten:
the image will remain
fixed in the dark river of the mind,
a white and promising intrusion.

THE ABORIGINAL

IMOGEN WHYSE

He passed me on the city street,
The dark epitome of grief.
The fathomless dark eyes were torn
With unknown terrors dumbly borne.
No one, not he, could plumb the deeps
In which his spirit swirls and weeps.
His roots feed on those hours when
His people trod a ferny glen
Now carpeted with arid stone.
Yet underneath it, bone to bone,
His desolated forbears keep
Eternal vigil, cannot sleep,
Knowing the Doom on them was spoken.
The Eternal Dreaming Djarp is broken.

He, too, remembers in his soul
Remembers, mistily, the whole
Lost years, majestical slow years
Unfolding Ritual Laws and Fears.

Then, head erect, with brilliant eyes
He roamed this Southern Paradise;
Lived through enchanted dreaming hours
Under the dark sky's glowing flowers.

Here, on our sterile hills, his myth
Was sung and danced and chanted with
A deep experienced belief
Centuries gathered, Time's living sheaf.

His body daubed in Ritual signs,
Old as the Dreaming it enshrines,
With cupping hands, with stamp and spring
Within the mysterious Tribal ring,
Urged by emphatic, tapping stick,
Didjeridoo note, low, urgent, quick,
By fireside bright,
Through deep-set night,
He acted out in rhythmic rhyme
The Dream of Life his own life's chime.
Then, man and nature, present, past,

Caught within a spiral vast,
Before the leaping, primal fire,
Dramatised the soul's desire
And, wrought together in deep trance,
Lived out life's full experience.

He knew the Ritual Dreaming Hours;
Knew the tremendous Dreaming powers.
Remembers, too, when he was 'straight',
Before his soul bore such a weight.
For, initiated, he must learn
The Totem-Dreaming, old and stern;
Must strictly follow without flaw
Tribal sanctions, Ritual law;
Live through his own life-giving past
Expressed in nature, in man's heart;
Hold hard experienced belief
Breathed into him by mother, Chief;
Must understand that strength through faith
Is greater far than strength through force.
These beliefs scorned – nothing were gain:
'For evil is by evil slain.'

Our ruthless hands destroyed this pride.
But Hunger will be satisfied!
He is not dead, his spirit sleeps.
Awakened! harvests that he reaps
May desolate – can bless this land:
We feed the seed into his hand.
Seed of friendship's love and trust?
Or cold indifference's dust?
The future holds the unborn flower,
Alight with love or red with power.
For no man lives without a creed:
What do we offer for his need?

We spurn the way his spirit treads.
He cannot understand the threads
By which we spin and live and die.
Tangling his mind, they terrify.

On Ritual his life was built.
Destroyed, then must his spirit wilt
In mute bewilderment and dread.
Without the Dreaming, life is dead.

Closed within material walls
We cannot hear the myriad calls
He once heard clear along the wind,
Nor see his signs.
We, too, are blind.

SLEEP AND DREAMS

EDITH M. WALKER

Good-night, we go to sleep,
Shutting the door between
The happy living union
The day for us has been,
Into different worlds
Where dreams have life apart,
And you will wander far from me
Who own my waking heart.

I shall go through a world
Where dream-toss'd seas run high,
Beholding faces all unknown,
Hearing strange voices cry;
I'll see new cities shine
And roam new countries o'er,
And breathe an air you do not know
On some unfathomed shore.

Where do I go, and you,
Till we shall meet again
And feel the threads of life
Linked in their golden chain;
Who am I then, – and you –
Who in such dreams can move,
And life be alien in our hearts
Not knowing of our love?

Good-night, we go to sleep!
Hold you my hand a span,
Whether we go to shore or deep
Must surely be God's plan:
Through dreams where mirage lies,
Through silence in what sphere,
Where have we voyaged, you and I
Who wake so close and near?

WHITE HERON

GRACE PORTERFIELD POLK

Rippling waters sang along the banks,
Branches bowed and trailed their dainty leaves,
White herons, symbol of a spirit land,
Poised as statues in low marshes.
A breeze came singing by,
The herons rose as in formation, outlining
Magic veils, a silhouette against a sky of silver.
Likened to a flag of purity
Unfurled by angel's wings –
Birds of Paradise – the Everglades
Returned to waters and the mystery of the marshes.

CRUCIFIXION WITH A LAMP AND A MIRROR

ELISABETH AYRTON

The captain is departing and the King
Is going now.
The long triangle of his head
Is raised, not seeing anything
Below him any more,
Nor seeing now at all.

So she who sits below
Is alone now.
Her tears have dried stiff and salt in the darkness:
Nothing is left, not even an end.

No end for the night,
For the morning, no beginning;
Yet this little flame,
And darkness over the face of the earth
Is broken for a space.

Up there in the cold, where the light does not reach
The King is gone now.
'Is nothing left?
In all this horror of pain and cold and darkness and departing
Is nothing left for the morning?
Mirror, mirror, at least in the little light
You show me my well-known face.'

THE BELEAGUERED HEART: THE POETRY OF P. D. CUMMINS

MELVILLE CHANING-PEARCE

Except among a minority, which includes Walter de la Mare, Roy Campbell, Dr. Vaughan Williams and the late Desmond MacCarthy, the poetry of P. D. Cummins has not yet received the recognition which it merits and, in the long run, will certainly receive. It is significant not only as poetry but also as prophecy. It is a poetry which does not parade its modernity and yet, by virtue of an extreme sensitivity and a terrible integrity, is far more modern in its mood and music than most of the blatantly adult, sophisticated verse which is in fashion to-day.

Three slight collections of Phyllis Cummins's poetry* have been published at four-yearly intervals and, I am informed by the author, a further sequence of poems is now in the making. Her poetry thus covers a period which includes World War II and its aftermath. In view of its fidelity to the contemporary 'stream of consciousness' the dating is important.

In this brief study no attempt at a measured criticism is possible or will be attempted. It essays no more than an introduction to a very significant poet. A general survey of her three books shows a structure of certain familiar metres and verse-forms, such as the Elizabethan sonnet and octosyllabic and decasyllabic rhymed couplets, which is constant. There are few metrical, assonantal or rhyming experiments in the modern mode to be found here, and echoes of Gerard Manley Hopkins or T. S. Eliot, so pervasive in other contemporary verse, are conspicuous by their absence.

Phyllis Cummins has avoided the infection, both in style and substance, of the literary coteries and cults endemic in our time, and she seems to have found from the first certain well-established, lapidary poetic patterns which age cannot stale, and modestly and fittingly subjected herself to their discipline. Her work suggests qualities of discipline and integrity, and, for those weary of a sprawling indiscipline, it is a happy omen that it should be so. Here is a modern poet who can accept time-honoured forms of English poetry and dexterously employ them to express her purpose and the contemporary mood.

Although her form is ancient her feeling is modern. In each successive book an increasing mastery of form together with a steadily-maturing insight, felicity of diction, spontaneity, lucidity and poetic logic are observable. This progression is especially notable in her

* *The Defeated* (1947); *One is One* (1951); *Some Phases of Love* (1955) by P. D. Cummins (Macmillan).

handling of the most alluring and elusive of all English measures – the Elizabethan sonnet. She has always used it as to the manner born. but a comparison of examples from the first and the third of these books reveals the effortless ease and technical skill to which she has now attained. In her treatment of that delicate and difficult cameo-art there are few to compare with her since George Meredith.

It is a facility for which it is not difficult to find temperamental reasons. For her affinity with the Elizabethan life-attitude and, more particularly, with that of John Webster, is palpable. Webster's influence upon her art and attitude is unmistakable and undisguised. It is not for nothing that, in her first book, perhaps the most haunting and personal poem is that entitled 'I am Duchess of Malfi still.' It is indeed in the mood and with something of the high temper of the doomed Duchess that P. D. Cummins confronts her own tensions and tribulation of spirit. It might be said, as Cariola said of the Duchess:–

> Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman
> Reign most in her, I know not; but it shows
> A fearful madness . . .

The spirit of greatness and of woman is indeed commingled in this poetry. For all its fundamental brain-work it is primarily a poetry of feeling, of *the beleaguered heart* in one of its most frequent images, and of a love which ranges far beyond the erotic. The exquisite *eros*-pathos of such poems as 'Moonlight' ('There's moonlight on your brow') or 'A Moment Out of Time' passes with an eagle-flight to the celestial love and longing of 'In Excelsis' ('I am the King of Heaven's daughter') or 'Point Of No Return.' P. D. Cummins's muse, in its poignancy of feeling, is fundamentally feminine, but in its full flight finds the supra-sexual stratosphere of the mystic, and recalls the ardours and ecstasies of Teresa of Avila or Richard Crashaw.

And it is radically religious. Its music and intention seem ever on the edge of some 'break-through' – in Martin Buber's phrase – from a terrestrial to a celestial dimension of being, and imbued with a strangely Sibylline, oracular quality which suffuses poetry with prophecy. This imminent break-through is envisaged in the imagery of now a 'rape' of the beleaguered heart, now in the terms of uttermost aspiration and suffering, and now of some invasion of an 'intruder' whom the racked heart and brain alike invite to 'burn your way in on feet of flame', so that the spirit 'in that vibrating anguish' may be 'annihilated and remade.'

It is always through annihilation and rebirth, 'through that dissolution which is light', that the ultimate redemption of the 'heart's hell of terror' is conceived. 'From negation the divine may flower.' The poetry is thus instinct with both the nihilism and the death-wish which have for so long obsessed the modern mind, but in the key of

Kierkegaard's 'First death, then life' rather than of Sartre's existentialist despair.

In the latest of P. D. Cummins's three books the sense of and the need for the full realization of the 'nothingness of time' and the 'soundless void of self' are counterpointed by increasingly urgent intimations of some 'unexpected burst', 'chord of light', 'sun that will not set', becoming more and more acute and apocalyptic. An incandescent insight is attained in the line which concludes the sequence entitled 'The Possessed': 'Grace only falls on those who are accursed.'

This insight is more profound than the poet may have known as she wrote. For, according to an immemorial tradition, the holy and the accursed, the saint and the scapegoat, meet full circle in the prophetic soul of mankind. Each in his own fashion is 'sacred', 'devoted', set aside from the common life of man for his redemption. It is an archetypal faith which, consciously or sub-consciously, informs the thought and feeling of Phyllis Cummins's poetry. They who take upon themselves, as Keats wrote, 'the giant agony of the world' can alone enable that break-through, of the 'desperate dark gates' imprisoning the beleaguered heart and mind of man, from darkness to light and time to eternity. There, in that devotion, grows the 'green, rootless herb of grace, Miraculous and waterless', which alone can set 'the engine' of man's doom and destiny 'in reverse.'

In this third of P. D. Cummins's books, *Some Phases of Love*, the poetry and the prophecy of these prolegomena seem near a dénouement which, for those with eyes to see, promises to be an event of moment both for the 'beleaguered' poetry of our generation and for the 'beleaguered heart' and mind of modern man. Their study suggests an ancient monition: 'Though the vision tarry, wait for it.'

CAPRICE

IRMA SIMNETT

You have haunted me like a ghost with your airs and graces;
High stepping along the lanes of your bright fancy,
Your dudgeon, your disdain, are so enchanting
That every crisp leaf along the sunlit pavement blown,
Each cushioned shade, each lone, melancholy tree
You have made my own;
The delicate-stepping indifference of slit-eyed cats
And roses effortless floating on sun-spilled air,
All palpable now; and Summer's lightest breeze
As a thousand wind-swept strings troubling the trees.

I MOURNED MY LOVE

GILA URIEL

I mourned my love
For many days
In deadly pain.

I asked myself:
If love decays,
Why live in vain?

I tried to part
With mortal ties
And live in death.

Like empty pools
Were both my eyes
And cold my breath.

OUR APPLE TREE BLOSSOMS

PAMELA MELNIKOFF

Helen was not so lovely as this tree;
Nor are there queens in legend to compare
With this pale lady who with artistry
Embroiders flowers on the blue evening air.

Kings will not ride to battle through desire
For these white arms, nor will their hosts destroy
A city for her sake, nor gild with fire
The clamorous turrets of a second Troy.

Helen is dust, and all her lovers slain
By ruthless Time, who is our oldest foe.
Passion that wrenched a world apart with pain
Flowered for a day and withered long ago.

Helen is gone . . . yet this frail tree will live
While lesser poets than blind Homer sing
Of the white splendour that her flowers will give,
Till Time shall end, to each unfailing Spring.

FOR BARBARA

JAMES HARRISON

Like pale petals
That float on streams,
Still curled at the edges
When new,
Jostled and rocked by ripples
In tiny anchorages,
These thoughts of you
Lie gently along the marges of my dreams.

SOFTLY CALL

MARJORIE S. DYER

Softly call me, in the sigh of a gentle breeze,
In the music of wandering brooks and swirling streams.
In the rustle of autumn leaves, swept from their parent trees,
Till the night brings sweet reunion, in my dreams.

Softly call me, as I pass down the valley of sleep
Into the shining fields of our finest years.
And over the bridge of dreams, there our tryst to keep,
I have paid the toll, in waiting, with my tears.

HOW LIKE DECEMBER

K. M. TURNER

How like December are my thoughts now,
Wrapped in a sheet of desolation,
Barren fields, frost-swept, reminding me
We are sisters in contemplation.

Yours is the contemplation of Spring,
The catkin and the violet share
The hesitant, timorous welcome
You offer, of lodgings, bleak and bare.

I find the woods quietly hushed now,
Almost a mellowing peace is here,
Almost, except that all seasons are
December, when you have gone, my dear.

ZOSIA

JACK LINDSAY

(From the Polish of Adam Mickiewicz, 1798–1856)

Girl See, red clover is my crown
and a wand of green I wield.
A lamb goes leaping in the field,
butterflies swing up and down,
and I call the lamb again,
'Come to me,' and call in vain.
Still the lamb is skipping on
and I chase a butterfly
and it swerves and flutters by –
now I've caught it! no, it's gone.

(*sings*)

Zosia, prettiest girl in town,
went lightly shepherding.
But all the flocks ignored her frown
and gambolled through the spring.

Oles fetched a turtle-dove
and for a kiss he prayed;
but prayer and present and lots of love
didn't move the maid.

Jozio brought his richest fairing,
Antos brought his heart;
but Zosia wandered on uncaring
and shepherded apart.

I am that Zosia, that maid
who lived with you in the village-shade.
Lovers in droves, but I'd never wed.
For nineteen summers I laughed instead,
and then, it's a pity, I died one day,
a doll where no grief or joy held sway.
Here in the world, but not of it, I dwelt,
and dreams skimming over were all I felt.
My lambs on the rolling downs I raced,
petals along the breeze I chased,
a swallow swooping out of the sky,
a bluewinged darting dragonfly,
but never a lover at all had I.
At times as I led my sheep on the hill,
the sound of a flute followed me still
and shepherds, flattering my charms,

sought to coax me to their arms,
but I never heeded the softest sigh.

Then why has death now lighted a fire,
a secret fire of strange desire?
Anywhere I yet may play,
following breezes across the day,
free from aches and fears I stray,
wonderful veils at will I weave
out of the tints that rainbows leave,
and the morning-dews I mould
to shining globes and doves of gold.
But it's lonely, all alone.
Fevered now I watch and wait
for the rustling of a mate,
no companions come my way,
Aimlessly around I'm blown
like a feather, unaware
if I'm bound to earth or air,
here and there and everywhere,
like the waves that fall and rise
on a shoreless stretch of ocean,
I can't reach the windy skies
or reach the land, for all my motion.

Chorus Like the waves that fall and rise
on a shoreless stretch of ocean,
she can't reach the windy skies
or reach the land, for all her motion.

Wizard Little spirit, what's your lack
to speed you on your heavenward track?
Litanies that aid a sinner,
or a very dainty dinner:
cakes and cherries, strawberries,
tarts and cream – take what you please.
Little spirit, what's your lack
to speed you on your heavenward track?

Girl I've not come to beg such alms.
Let your lads but catch my hand,
pull me earthward as they sing,
and so, one dance-beat of their ring,
I'll join their merry friendly band.

THE LAST ANGEL

GWYNETH ANDERSON

I heap myself a bracken bed
And gather moss about my feet,
And feel, in every live heart-beat,
My kinship with the happy dead.

All unmolested, summer flies
May rest upon my lids at will;
Green is my canopy and still –
Closed upon green my aching eyes.

And so I lie and covet sleep
– Not for the interval it brings –
But that one day I hear thy wings
When out from consciousness I leap.

DRAGONFLY MOMENT

WINIFRED KINGDON-WARD

Seize the flying moment,
The splendid dragonfly,
With peacock iridescence
Borrowed from the sky.
Symphony of rhythm,
Passion wrought in speed,
Rapier-flash of thought
And genesis of deed.

Colours of moonrise
With daemon-like form,
Black-lacquered head
Of terrible charm!

Seize then the moment
Of joy immemorial,
The laughter, delight,
Like bright, troubling birds
From heavens arboreal;
Seize in its flight
And pin down with words;

But never, never think
You can capture its reality,

Its intrinsicality,
The trueness of its life,
The *be*-ness, that can never
Be imprisoned in words,
Nor imparted through ink.

Words may be jewels;
Their lustre does not die;
But what is their brightness
To that of the dragonfly
Who reflects the glory of the sky?

'A MEMORIAL, ENGRAVED IN WRITING . . .'

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

A man's last journey should be like an afternoon's
Walk, an easy stroll towards rest, hands thrust
In pockets, a dog to heel, and the sun setting,
Something of himself about it. So William Morris
Went to his sleep, all he loved close around him,
Borne on the galleon-waggon, scarlet and blue,
Sailing under the full-fledged yellow elms,
And over the cottage gardens Michaelmas daisies,
Amethyst, rose-quartz, in their crystalline forms
Lying like seams of jewels, sparkling and shining
In loose stars uncovered to the rain.
As if splattered by a gigantic quill
Rooks blotted the sky, large jet bugles of birds.
Children leaned on gates whose lichen burned
In livid green and lambent amber, like toads.
And women, white aprons taut over rose or blue
Starched skirts, stood with summer at their back,
And the dark scrawl of winter written in a dark
Bare branch, and leaves that skittered like mice on the ground.
So, proudly, the yeoman and the craftsman
Travelled home with the creak of leather, the level
Hoof-fall, the beat of hobnails on a country road
For his last music, as apt for him as the thin
Cry of seabirds, the white, invisible flame
Hissing upwards to the sun as Shelley lay
The young, lost hero on his archaic pyre,
With the sea purring appeased, and the small waves
He loved leaping like kittens with sheathed claws.

MODERN POETRY AND METAPHYSICS

STUART HOLROYD*

Man is again faced with the unknown, the unpredictable. The optimism, the faith in progress, the neatly-organized knowledge of our nineteenth-century forbears have been shaken to their very foundations, and to-day, whether he looks into himself or into the world outside himself, man encounters a void. Under these conditions there has occurred during the present century a change in sensibility, which has had a profound effect upon all departments of human activity. This change has caused a return of the metaphysical element into modern poetry.

If we ignore the metaphysical element in poetry we reduce it to being a pleasant diversion or a mere escape from the cares of life. Great poetry is neither of these things. It is an attempt to apprehend the ultimate reality which lurks, elusive, behind appearances, behind the smoke-screen produced by our tendency to look at life through our own personal prismatic spectacles, which distort it in order to make it conform to our needs or our preconceptions. Most of us see just that small bit of reality which enables us to live, to act in accordance with our inclinations. The poet is, for psychological reasons, freed from the necessity of acting, not permanently, but just for moments, moments when, as Wordsworth said;—

> the light of sense
> Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world.

In such moments of detachment and insight the poet is, in the most essential sense of the word, a metaphysician. His aim is to apprehend the Absolute Truth and the Absolute Reality. Absolutes exist only in the world of metaphysics, and it is into this world that the poet projects himself in the moment of self-transcendence which is the prelude to the creative act.

Metaphysics is a word which may be variously defined. In one of its aspects it is the science of being: it proposes to itself the task of discovering what is, what may be said to exist. When poetry penetrates the veils of appearances and seeks to probe into the ultimate reality it is metaphysical in this sense of the word. But now consider Bertrand Russell's definition of metaphysics as 'the attempt to conceive the world as a whole by means of thought.' Does the poet do this? If it means the seeing of the world in the terms of a personal vision which gives it coherence and meaning, he sometimes does. Dante and Blake may be cited as examples. But if it means the attempt to construct a system of thought which will embrace and explain every

*A shortened version of a lecture delivered to the Poetry Society on September 30th, 1955.

aspect of reality, very few if any metaphysical poets could be made to fit such a definition. The poet has an innate wisdom which keeps him clear of systems. He is content to catch existence on the wing, to give expression to the moments as they pass, and thereby invest them with a kind of permanence. The difference between the metaphysician as philosopher and the metaphysician as poet is that the former endeavours to *explain* the world while the latter seeks to *affirm* the world. As W. H. Auden said in a recent broadcast: 'Essentially poetry is an affirmation of being, and the main motive for writing it is a dread of non-being.'

Because he realizes that existence, or actuality, cannot be comprehended by any system, the metaphysical poet has more in common with the modern Existentialist thinkers than with any of the traditional philosophers. Let us see now whether a definition by one of these thinkers might not take us further than the one already quoted from Bertrand Russell. In his *Metaphysical Journal* Gabriel Marcel writes: 'A mind is metaphysical insofar as its position within reality appears to it essentially unacceptable . . . It is in a false position. The problem is to correct this or to bring about a *détente*. Metaphysics is just this correction or this *détente*.'

The great virtue of this definition is that it is psychological. We learn from it that metaphysics is not, as many people imagine, mere abstract talk, an intellectual pursuit suitable for armchair moments when the mind is free from anxiety. On the contrary, it arises from the soil of ordinary human existence and bursts into flower under the pressure of adversity, when the security of that existence is threatened and the mind is brought up against the eternal problems which the even tenor of normal life tends to obscure. It is of the greatest importance that we should distinguish between the metaphysics which explores in a leisurely way the problems of the nature of Truth, the nature of Reality and the nature of Being, and that other metaphysics which, arising out of human need in particular situations, *feels* these problems to be closely connected with life, to be, in the idiom of the detective story writer, a matter of life and death. As a character in one of Shaw's minor plays says: 'There is nothing like a good look in the face of death: close up: right on you: for showing you how little you really believe and how little you really are.' These questions: What can I believe? and What am I? are two of the fundamental problems of metaphysics, and there arise certain situations in life when it becomes all-important that we should find answers to them. The dying Ivan Ilyich in Tolstoy's story grapples with questions which had never even occurred to him before. His mind became metaphysical because, as Marcel says, his position within reality became unacceptable to him. His thinking was not an intellectual

diversion but an attempt to build life up again on new foundations after the old foundations had crumbled beneath the weight of his questioning.

The ultimate determinant of greatness in poetry, as in any other art or human activity, is a man's awareness of, and his attitude towards, certain fundamental problems. Kant most simply formulated these as: What can I know? What shall I do? What may I hope for? and What is man? Implied in these are the other questions: What is the purpose of life? and What is real? Now these are only brought before the consciousness of the normal man as a result of some extraordinary circumstance. But the metaphysical poet – and here is the definition I have been working towards – is the poet who is constantly aware of these questions, aware of them not merely intellectually, but as problems bearing on existence, problems of living. There are some men who cannot live without a consciousness of purpose. In seeking purpose they become metaphysicians, and if they have a certain balance of sensibility and imaginative power they become metaphysical poets. Other men are haunted by a sense of the unreality of the world as it at first appears. If they seek the substance behind the shadow by the exercise of their intellectual faculties, they become philosophers: and if by the exercise of their imaginative faculties, they become metaphysical poets.

Poetry, then, is metaphysical when it proceeds from a mind which is aware of the eternal problems, or which sees, beyond the apparent order of the world, the elemental chaos upon which human life is built. The poetry does not have to be directly concerned with these problems or with their solution, the only thing that matters is that it should have its origin in a consciousness which is aware of them. Only when we have fully grasped this fact can we afford to consider metaphysical poetry in the objective manner and observe its external characteristics, which is what I now propose briefly to do.

The first of these characteristics may for convenience be labelled 'intellectual agility'. The mind of a man who attains to the high level of consciousness where the eternal questions are realities is intensely alive and active. He delights in subtleties of thought, in uniting the most heterogeneous images and ideas. That is why his poetry sometimes seems difficult and fantastic. He delights also in paradox, and in this he reveals the depth of his understanding of life, for, as Jung writes in *Psychology and Alchemy*, 'only the paradox comes anywhere near to comprehending the fullness of life. Non-ambiguity and non-contradiction are one-sided and thus unsuited to express the incomprehensible.' So active is the metaphysical poet's mind that he sometimes omits the links between thoughts, and the reader must himself be intellectually agile in order to supply them. But the poet's frequent

use of the unexpected word, the surprising image, the fantastic juxtaposition, is not mere word-play, but the only and inevitable way of expressing his personal vision.

The metaphysical poet moves for the most part in the realm of thought, but his thought has a peculiar quality. It is thought *felt*, it is closely bound up with the emotions, with the body. Yeats wrote 'A Prayer For Old Age,' which began:

> God guard me from those thoughts men think
> In the mind alone;
> He that sings a lasting song
> Thinks in a marrow-bone.

In poetry the metaphysical is not the denial but rather the sublimation of the physical. Here the great dichotomy between spirit and matter, which so worried Plato and Descartes, is resolved. The metaphysical poet has room in his work for all aspects of reality, all kinds of experience. It is easy enough to affirm a world that appears wholly beautiful. The difficult thing is to be aware of all the darker aspects of reality, to look upon all that is most ugly, repulsive, deformed and evil, and still affirm. A metaphysical novel like James Joyce's *Ulysses* has for its object the presentation of life in its fullness, the affirmation of the functions of the body as well as those of the intellect.

The last main point I wish to draw attention to is concerned with diction. The metaphysical poet hates the word or image that adorns rather than explains. He seeks to express himself with what Keats called 'the true voice of feeling.' He will not admit into his poem any word that is not alive. Dead 'poetic' words with vague evocative powers he abhors. He needs language which will capture the immediacy of his thought or experience and convey it to the reader without any loss of intensity.

It will be obvious how these external features of his poetry relate back to the psychological constitution of the metaphysical poet as I have tried to describe it. When any or all of the eternal questions cease to be merely verbal, as they are for most of us, and become real for the poet, get in his blood, so to speak, then his work becomes metaphysical. Understanding of the subject in this psychological manner is worth a hundred objective definitions of what metaphysical poetry is or seems to be. However, in conclusion I propose to give just such an objective definition, though the reader will observe that, like all of its kind, it leaves much unsaid. I hope he may now be able to supply for himself whatever is lacking in it. Here is the definition: Metaphysical poetry is life crystallized into language at its moments of greatest intensity; it involves a new way of seeing things, engendered in a state of higher consciousness.

ANACREONTICS

KENNETH HARE

JOHN: PAUL: ROBERT

'Wine-drinking Paul's fallen dead? And why?' –
'His blood-pressure was far too high.'
'But temperate Bob's gone too?' – 'You know
His blood-pressure was far too low.' –
'What's killed teetotal John?' – 'They say
Depression carried him away.' –
'Since drink or not drink, life will pass,
For God's sake join me in a glass!'

WINE AND TEA

Wits whose works endure like rock,
Have sprung from good wine-selling stock,
But what a host of knaves we see
Whose odious fathers peddled tea!
Whilst all the bards, a mighty line,
Hail Father Bacchus as divine,
Tea of *one* poet praises had:
He was – the poor, poor fellow! – mad.

OLD PORT

A wonderful thing is old port,
  Compared with mere silver and gold,
And if we lived all as we ought,
  In buckets we'd have the stuff sold.
The Ape of his wisdom will speak –
  And, oh! how profound is his thought! –
And the Owl is a beautiful Greek,
  After a pint of good port!

POETS?

PAUL SELVER

Poets? That junto of interlopers, perpetrating farragos of jabberwocky (o, the welters of drivel), mildewed flummery,
Rhymeless, shapeless – no wonder we con it so queasily?
Zanies masquerading as sages – nay, as mages – contortionists wheezily
Out-Hopkinsing Hopkins, Whitmannikins mouthing sham bolshevik rant and fustian mummery?

Poets? Well, Shakespeare (who would ruthlessly have wielded the untrammelled vernacular
To mock them and their toadies and touts) spoke of the poet's eye, a weird
Organ which, he said, rolled in a fine frenzy. No optic of *theirs*, glazed or bleared,
Would ever perform antics so indecorously spectacular.

Poets? *That* crew of tricksters? If *they* are poets, why then
It would seem
That such men
As Milton and Donne must have been
Thimble-riggers; and Byron, Shelley, Browning and Keats,
Demented yahoos, bawling, brawling, caterwauling in the midnight streets.

SPECTACLES

ALEXANDER BUIST

I have lost my spectacles,
So that I can read
Only the heads of the static columns,
See but the heads of the moving columns.

*

I found my spectacles;
Now that I can read again
The close-set single-spacing,
See clear each individual, top to toe,
I know no more of world-trend, the beat of human heart,
Than with unaided vision.

COWARD AT HEART

M. SHAND SMITH

The hope I have cherished for months will, I fear, never come to fruition.
A wish to write verse in the modernist manner inflames my ambition,
But time and again I am stopped in my tracks by that bogy, Tradition.

I plan out my lines, all of differing lengths for no obvious reason.
I leave out my rhymes save the new ones that boldly match *basin* with *treason*,

And then the Dead Hand will attack my extremities, turning the freeze on.
I introduce words in provocative context, for modernist eyes
Look coldly on poets who do not know how to garb thought in new guise,
And then I start picturing Alfred Lord Tennyson's look of surprise.

I find it quite daunting. I'll have to go back to iambic pentam:
And old-fashioned rhyming. At least when I rhyme I can see where I am.
I'm not like these stout-hearted heroes, the poets who don't care a dam'.

'DEAR EDITORS – '

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*.)

D. H. LAWRENCE AND FREE VERSE

Lest any reader still has any wrong ideas about 'free verse' I am venturing to quote from a new volume of *Selected Literary Criticism* by D. H. Lawrence, edited by Anthony Beal (Heinemann, 21s.).

> . . . But in free verse we look for the insurgent throb of the instant moment. To break the lovely form of metrical verse, and to dish up the fragments as a new substance, called *vers libre*, this is what most of the free-versifiers accomplish. They do not know that free verse has its own *nature*, that it is neither star nor pearl, but instantaneous like plasm.

P. G. SMITH.

END-RHYME AND ALL THAT

When we speak of 'end-rhyme' we mean rhyme at the end of the line, as opposed to internal rhyme (that is, within the line). P. R. Dunn's friend (Oct.-Dec. number) seems not to know it.

When distinction is necessary between the cut-spot, top-tap sort of half-rhyme and the cuts-spots, tops-taps, stars-stirs sort, the former could, I suggest, be called simple half-rhyme, the latter double half-rhyme. Braiding-brooding, tricky-tacky would be feminine half-rhyme.

Some interesting remarks on half-rhyme were made by the late Michael Roberts in the superb introduction to his *Faber Book of Modern Verse*, but as there had been so few practitioners before the last war it is doubtful if he was aware of its possibilities. (As we too probably are still, unless we have read widely the better mid-century American poets.)

Herbert Palmer thinks of (internal) assonance particularly as a device of the Victorians and the Edwardians. It has always, surely, been an ingredient of much of our best vowel-music: 'They flee from me, that sometime did me seek' (Wyatt); 'My love is like to ice, and I to fire' (Spenser); 'The sorriest wight may find release of pain, The driest soil' (Southwell), 'Ask

me no more where Jove bestows' (Carew); 'A horse misus'd upon the road Calls to Heaven for human blood' (Blake).

In Wordsworth's famous sonnet, 'The world is too much with us; late and soon', 'waste' and 'Nature' are key words in lines 2 and 3, and changes are rung on other vowels through the remainder. All these are but the most obvious, the simplest instances, and I could add many more.

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

'VERY HEARTENING'

It is very heartening, in these days still so unfavourable to poetry, to find *The Poetry Review* so alive and vital – and, in my opinion, even better value for the modest subscription than it used to be in the days when I first joined The Poetry Society, nearly twenty years ago.

MARGUERITE JOHANSEN DEANE.

THE PROUD PRINCESS OF VIX

M. E. MASON

In the deep brooding bosom of the earth
Men built this Royal Tomb.
And when the time had come
With ceremonial rite and sorrowing,
Coffined in her rich Chariot they brought
The Proud Princess to her last Resting-place . . .

Round her the guard of sculptored spearmen stood,
Treasure of Temple and of Palace stored:
Here jars that did the precious unguents hold,
And funeral meats were laid,
Lest, on its journey thence
The Spirit should have need of sustenance.

And at her head the circlet of fine gold
With the Winged Pegasus, that loving hands
Of cunning craft had sought
With rarer beauty to adorn.

And now, the broken earth lies open wide
Upon a page of history – the unprisoned air
Lifts heavy with the weight of centuries –
Stones shaped in dreams, and Might of Kings untold
In Dynasties long dead.

Step softly here: this dust touch tenderly
That has been shroud to so much majesty.

THIS HEART THAT BROKE SO LONG . . .

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The Poems of Emily Dickinson, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (The Belknap Press, Harvard University. Cumberlege, 3 vols., £10.)

These three volumes, austerely handsome, place Emily Dickinson in an honoured place among the great. Meticulously but unfussily edited, with biographical and bibliographical prefaces which incorporate extra-mural research, authentic reminiscence, and notes on variants and photostats of work-sheets, they form a rounded contribution to literature.

Only seven of Emily Dickinson's one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-five known poems were published during her lifetime, but the poet's method of 'packeting' her work and the devoted posthumous tabulation by Professor and Mrs. Todd must have lightened the labours of the present editor, whose chief problem has been the reinstatement of originals 'polished' by well-meaning contemporaries, and the chronological arrangement of the few packets mysteriously left unnumbered by the Todds. To this end, analysis of handwritten manuscripts and the type of paper used for them proved invaluable, and the numerous photostats help the reader to share the detective work.

Emily Dickinson, obscure spinster-daughter of a respected lawyer and Congressman, to outward appearances resembled many of genteel education who dabbled (and still do) in the Arts. She scarcely budged from her native nest of Amherst, Massachusetts. A lively, intelligent school-girl, she had been constrained by her headmistress to fight down a regrettable scepticism in religious matters — this was the mid-nineteenth century — and no doubt, the guilt complex so induced led to her ever-increasing preoccupation with poetry-writing as a means of secret argument. This hidden fire was fanned almost to immolation when, in her 'twenties, she fell in love with a blameless, middle-aged, married clergyman — Charles Wadsworth. 'Brewed from decades of agony,' her secret soul poured out its frustrated passion. Gradually, she became a complete recluse, the Bride of Calvary dressed all in white. "I had a terror I could tell to none . . . and so I sing – because I am afraid".'

Realizing that some kind of sympathetic contact was imperative for sanity, she had already made a sally toward T. W. Higginson, a pastor-*littérateur*, whose 'Letter to a Young Contributor' in *The Atlantic Monthly* had emboldened her to ask of him 'Do my poems breathe?' Poor Emily! Didn't she really ask, 'Can I continue to live – through my poems?'

A qualified 'Yes' encouraged her to permit publication of a few of her 'daintiest' poems (odd local comment), but the 'improvements' imposed on her 'quaintnesses' by well-meaning editors pushed her even deeper into her hermitage. Here, as might be expected, she alternated brooding with reading: Emerson and the Brontës had their part, and one wonders regretfully how much she might have drawn from that other torn soul, Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose still unpublished technical experiments might have been of

supreme importance to her. As it was, she concerned herself little with metries as such. Her jingling rhythms, so obviously based on chapel hymns, are attributed by Mr. Johnson to Watts' *Psalmodies*. By interspersing dashes, capitals, and curious turns of speech, she made them her own: clipetty-clop vehicles for strange and disturbing thoughts.

Perhaps her chief power dwells, as Blake's does, in the pointed arrangement of simple words, chosen not so much by the intellect as by the spirit, and sharpened by a compulsion not of mortal making.

How often we rush to proclaim genius flowering on a dung-heap: how often we excuse the fire-stricken stockbroker his desertion of suburban responsibilities for the sake of Art – after all, most have read *The Moon and Sixpence* by now – but genius nurtured in domesticity is a less exciting bloom, overlooked by any but the truly percipient eye. Emily Dickinson herself said: 'If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her'. Perhaps Grandma Moses echoes 'Amen' to that. Let us salute the wide country that also honours the less flamboyant flower.

STOIC AND EPICURE

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Scale of Things, by Patric Dickinson. (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d.)
Collected Poems (1927-1955). Bryan Guinness. (Heinemann, 15s.)

Patric Dickinson's radio programmes of comment and verse have long shed a steady light. Now, with subtlety of line and rhyme, his latest book of eighteen lyrics and nine satires helps his reputation as a poet who makes his communication obliquely by inference and symbol on two levels of consciousness: there is an immediate surface-clarity, but deeps are sounded and charted. He has an abiding sense of history and the duality of man, and an austerity of phrase. Above all the pervading note is one of a classical stoicism, bred of compassion, facing the transitory and the eternal:

> With a black rope of time
> Loose round my neck . . .
> O love burn stronger, draw
> Me back from this cold gulf –

Lord Moyne to non-poets, Bryan Guinness has spent a life of devotion to a demanding art and now, on the plateau of his fiftieth year, collects sixty poems as tokens of the journey. The sense of a pause for rest and survey is conveyed by his unusual method in *Collected Poems* of working backward from recent work towards the earliest he has deemed worthy of retention. Even his revealing and wise foreword is presented as a postscript of directive and comment. This innovation is a boon, if not to the critic, to the general reader.

Bryan Guinness recalls every phase in his wide-ranging life to evoke the fleeting moment in winged and burnished words. His development lies in a greater certainty and luxury of metre and music: 'The Snowflakes,' a late sequence of seventeen lyrics, is almost Swinburnian in alliteration. Yet a growing individual voice can be traced throughout, with its power to render abstract conceptions in concrete terms. Like an accolade, this collection is for all those concerned with the poetry of living, death and its problems apart.

THE RETURN OF ARTHUR

HERBERT PALMER

The Return of Arthur, by Martyn Skinner (Chapman and Hall, 12s. 6d.)

I have been greatly surprised by the mild reception given to the one book of last year's verse that has seemed to me to matter completely. *The Return of Arthur* is not only one of the longest poems published in this century (probably *the* longest of consequence), but also so devastating that it has been compared with George Orwell's *1984*. But unlike Orwell's novel it is often very laughter-provoking; and in some of the descriptive passages it takes us back to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

The comparisons made elsewhere with *Don Juan* have not been too apt because the poem has a religious and moralistic kernel which is absent from Byron's masterpiece. Moreover it is written in *rime royal*, not in *ottava rima* as is *Don Juan*. *Rime royal* is a Scottish and Chaucerian stanza used by John Masefield in some of his long narrative poems, with which I would partially link Skinner's poem. But, though a breath-taking story, it is at the same time much more of an allegory than anything by Masefield. Dean Swift, Dryden, Pope, and Roy Campbell also come to mind.

I have read the whole poem once, almost twice, and long passages of it three, four and five times. As my powers of concentration are not what they used to be, and I have difficulty in reading long poems, the fact that I could get to the end of it without labour suggests exceptional carrying powers in both technique and narrative, though the structure of the verse is at times very rough and slap-dash. There are many reasons why so many of our poets and critics have been silent about this remarkable book; but one reason seems outstanding – there is often a sting in it which must be intolerable to humbugs.

WIT AND LYRIST

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

Poems, by Trevor Blakemore, Foreword by Sir Compton Mackenzie (Neville Spearman, 8s. 6d.). *The Ballades of Trevor Blakemore,* Introduction by Guy Ramsey (Spearman, 3s. 6d.).

When Trevor Blakemore died nearly three years ago a gap was torn in the fabric of London's literary and social life. In the best sense he was an amateur of letters, tireless in producing lyrics, epigrams, stories, essays and literary lectures with a personal enthusiasm which few could resist. He was a born talker and something of his spontaneity was communicated in everything he wrote. He promoted and chaired several literary and social clubs, and at his table one met many of the most distinguished writers of the past three decades. As Sir Compton Mackenzie says: 'he bubbled like champagne,' and was mentally akin to Horace, Tibullus, Herrick and Cowley.

The collection of his *Poems*, selected by Mrs. Blakemore and Robert Gittings, gives a slight idea of his range in nature poetry, narrative verse, pieces of occasion, humour, satire and parody. He was a various-minded man, and would turn from writing the simplest upwelling love lyric to composing a

scathing epigram or premature epitaph, and the next day fashion a rondel or ballade. Born under Libra he knew his own restless spirit:

I am a balance seeking to adjust
All my life through two pans that sway and dip;
So sensitive, alas, I feel if dust
Settles upon my scales, or if Fate slip
A milligram on either side of me
I must start rocking to my very core,
Seeking proportion by an irony
That furthers disproportion all the more.

An elegiac sadness pervaded much of his work:

Out of wave's sound and exiled hither,
My stem grows arid, my roots wither,
And dessication creeping down
Turns my green fronds to yellow-brown.

He makes the generation between the wars ask:

Why were we born
To an age
Povery-stricken
Keeping up appearance
Giving phantoms of culture
Chimeras of progress
Simulacrums of comfort.

Symbolism, Imagism, the cult of the Sonnet, old French forms, straight English quatrains, all had their appeal for Trevor, and – like R. L. S. and William Canton – he was happy writing for children in the B.B.C. programme organized by his wife, Ann Driver.

Scores of people will wish to obtain his inimitable ballades in book form. I agree with Guy Ramsey in ranking his best efforts with those of Belloc, Chesterton, Baring and Mackintosh. Here his Anglo-Irish wit throws off all restrictions:

What a jovial life is here,
Under Merrie England's thrall!
Bolshevik and Profiteer
Keep us nicely to the wall;
Look who fills the guinea stall!
Look who drinks the vintage wine!
Sheep, I name you one and all,
Pushed by wolves and pulled by swine.

End-lines such as 'I want to gallop on the downward path' and 'Oh God, the muck they make us pay to see' convey some idea of the riotous quality of Blakemore's Ballades; and there is one Envoi which I treasure with the memory of a gallant spirit:

Unseen! Who lit me with Your glow,
Unheard! Who whispered through my past,
Pleasure, Ambition, melt like snow,
And rest has come to me at last.

*

MICKIEWICZ PRIZE—The announcement of this Award and the Report and Winning Sonnets will be included in our next issue.

WALES AND FRANCE

ARTHUR VIVIAN

A History of Welsh Literature, by Thomas Parry (Clarendon Press, 50s.)
L'Ame de la Poesie Canadienne Francaise, by Laure Riese (Macmillan, 21s.)
Anthology of Sixteenth to Twentieth Century French Poets, translated by Jessie Hendy McEwan (Maclellan, Glasgow)
Some Gems of Early Lyrical Poetry, translated from the Old French by Florence L. Wickelgren (Writers' Guild, 2s. 6d.)
A Short History of French Literature, by Geoffrey Brereton (Pelican, 3s. 6d.)

'Those who with torn feet and bleeding fingers have scaled the heights of mastery over some musical instrument, have yet their loss' – one almost hears our Wilton Cole's mellow voice declaiming his Kenneth Grahame: those who with quickened interest and consequent attention have read how an ordinary (and extraordinary) Englishman serving (1914-18) with the Welch Regiment was moved to learn and study the Welsh language and its bardic lore, and discovered (Robert Graves: *The White Goddess*) with the skill of E. A. Poe and Sherlock Holmes (modernized by Dorothy Sayers) how the old Welsh poems concealed the ancient Druid lore and mysteries from the persecuting Roman Christians, would do well to complete their knowledge by studying Welsh poetic technique in Doctor Parry's mighty work. This *History* is admirably translated and supplemented by Sir H. Idris Bell, author himself of so many outstanding works on the same subject, and, with his son, of many a Welsh poem.

This is no place nor time to itemize a work already classical, save to say that the valuable exposition of the *cynghanedd* and the *cywydd* (one of the twenty-four classic metres!) has been amplified by the translator with a special appendix. The book has itself been amplified by a section on the Welsh Renascence of 1900-50; which would lead the mere-fashionable fans of Dylan Thomas to put him on a proper level with his contemporaries, and among those of the tradition. Indeed, Thomas is only mentioned once in the book, in a chapter on Essays and Criticism, as having been admired by Aneirin ap Talfan Davies: but then, Thomas is known as a writer in English.

Of the French-Canadian poems in the second book on our list, we may take two lines by William Chapman (1850-1917):

> Notre langue naquit aux lèvres des Gaulois,
> Ses mots sont caressants, ses règles sont sévères,

to get the seventeenth-century savour and severity of the tongue. At the other end of the scale Saint-Denys-Garneau writes like Debussy ... The Duc d'Orléan's 'Le Temps a Laissié son Manteau' gets inverted by Miss McEwan into 'Now leaves behind the year'; adequate, but what Gerald Manley Hopkins called 'poetic language'! More successful are Dr. Wickelgren's early gems, each preceded by a prose-historic preface: her d'Orléan's English is natural and lovely.

The Pelican *History* is a good boil-down; the earlier centuries are overladen with names and detail, the concluding years, with Sartre, Anouilh, Montherlant, fresh and interesting. At the end we have a stimulating dates-list, exhaustive bibliography, and good index. An excellent library bargain.

TRIO AND TAILPIECE

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Give the Heart Rein, Sydney King Russell (Bookman Associates, 2 dollars, 75 cents).

Selected Poems, Robert P. Tristram Coffin (Macmillan Co., 2 dollars, 75 cents.).

Borestone Mountain Poetry Awards, 1955 (Stanford University Press, 3 dollars)

Poetry Today, Fire or Fog? Stanton A. Coblentz (Wings Press, U.S.A.).

Sydney King Russell is that rarity in modern verse, a genuinely lyrical poet whose words and metres sing. We could almost guess from his verbal harmonies that he is also distinguished in the sister art of music. And what a refreshing relief his work is to the almost ubiquitous pneumatic-drill rhythms we hear nowadays along the slopes of Parnassus! Nor is he afraid of emotion, but such is his exquisitely classical sense of form that his impulse never gets out of control. Many lyrics and sonnets in this worthily-produced collection have the same delicate artistry and haunting loveliness as we noted in his frequent inclusions in Thomas Moult's Best Poems of the Year.

Robert Tristram Coffin died last winter, beloved and deeply mourned by thousands. During his very active life he won almost every honour possible to an American poet, including a Pulitzer prize. But he certainly seems to have written too much. In these 105 poems he is often too easy on himself, and sentimental in the bad sense; at his best, especially on his favourite subjects of boyhood, fatherhood, New England country and character, he is moving and memorable. 'Poems came to me, not I to them' is a fair self-verdict on his spontaneity, good and bad.

The Borestone Mountain Anthology is the seventh in an annual series. Over two thousand poems were submitted by editors of the English-speaking magazines in which the poems first appeared. Seventy-six were selected by four distinguished poet-editors, with Mr. Robert Thomas Moore as editor-in-chief. *The Poetry Review* is represented by Dannie Abse's 'Song of an Old Man'. Catholic in choice, scrupulous in editorship, beautifully printed and bound, this anthology is a joy not only to the mind, but to the hand and eye.

It was Dr. Johnson who said that poetry is difficult to define, but we all know what poetry isn't. Mr. Coblentz for some time in his gallant verse-quarterly, *Wings*, has been putting this dictum into practice. On a left-hand page of each number he reprints a poem with the caption, 'This is Poetry,' and on its corresponding side, captioned 'This is not Poetry,' work that he considers spurious. The author of each reprinted good poem incidentally gets five dollars from our distinguished friend, Mr. Albert Ralph Korn. This compact and enlightening brochure is a collection of such pages. Of the fourteen good poems reprinted three are by contributors to *The Poetry Review*, including Phoebe Hesketh and P. D. Cummins.*

* Editorial Note.—The third is Geoffrey Johnson.

STRENUOUS EXERCISE

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Interpretations. Essays on Twelve English Poems. Edited by John Wain (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25s.)

Buttressed fore and aft by the erudition of John Wain, in an introduction, and of G. S. Fraser, in an Epilogue, this volume is a courageous venture in publishing. It contains twelve essays, each on a different poem or a fragment of a poem, by twelve assorted authors. As the topics include 'Christabel,' 28 lines of 'Macbeth', Hopkins's 'The Windhover' and Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle,' the volume has little cohesion or coherence. Its unity is not that of a necklace on a thread but the unity of a bundle of miscellaneous papers, held together by an elastic band. Nevertheless, if the papers themselves be valuable, their rather arbitrary association is of no serious consequence.

Certainly one can say that the papers are indeed valuable. Some of the essays appeared in a periodical under the general title of 'How to Read a Poem,' and it is significant that Mr. Fraser's epilogue is 'On the Interpretation of a Difficult Poem.' Throughout the volume, we find close criticism, and a patient, painstaking attempt to discover the inwardness, the subtleties, the total gesture, of the poem thus set under the microscope.

Here is no easy reading; the poetry-lover who wants to browse pleasantly in a facile commentary on favourite poems, will hardly complete a page; he can be promised blood, tears, and sweat. The reader, however, who does, with mental loins girt, wrestle with these Interpretations will have tired muscles but an enriched spirit.

OLD AND NEW VOICES

F. PRATT GREEN

Moon's Farm and other Poems, by Herbert Read (Faber, 10s. 6d.)
The Shield of Achilles, by W. H. Auden (Faber, 10s. 6d.)
Friday's Child, by Wilfred Watson (Faber, 9s. 6d.)

It is a tribute to Herbert Read that we never think of him as a survivor from a vanished age. Yet he was born in the same year as Wilfred Owen, won fame as a poet of the First World War, was influenced by Imagism, and has lived through more poetic revolutions than is good for us. Persuasive champion of the modern in art and literature, he has the reputation, despite the evidence of many anthologised poems, of being a difficult and even chilly poet. His new volume reminds us that he can be direct, evocative, and human, though 'Moon's Farm,' written for broadcasting, does not escape aridity in some of its metaphysical speculations.

Those who became alive to poetry in the Age of Auden, in the early nineteen-thirties, will be delighted to possess *The Shield of Achilles*, which contains a sufficient number of poems in his true and original vein to satisfy them. There is little trace here of the Auden who wandered in the wilderness to the disadvantage of his art. The most unsatisfactory poem in the book is 'Sext', in which Auden adopts a form more suited to the peculiar gifts of a

Wallace Stevens than to his own. The most impressive is the title-poem. Here Auden sounds a deeper and graver note than we have heard before, without losing his authentic voice:

> The mass and majesty of this world, all
> That carries weight and always weighs the same
> Lay in the hands of others; they were small
> And they could not hope for help and no help came:
> What their foes like to do was done, their shame
> Was all the worst could wish; they lost their pride
> And died as men before their bodies died.

It was unlucky for the Canadian author of *Friday's Child* that the publication of his first book to appear in Britain coincided with the latest palace revolution, with the cry – Dylan Thomas is dead ! Long live William Empson ! Wilfred Watson is the child of Dylan Thomas. That is enough to damn him in the eyes of some people. Which reminds me of the very modern young lady who said to her young man: 'We won't have children, darling, they're so terribly derivative!' Personally, I enjoyed many poems in this book. I felt that the author had enjoyed writing them, an impression one rarely has when reading contemporary poets. I am sure Wilfred Watson knows what he is about and that he will be about something else, equally interesting, before long.

IDIOMATIC

EVELYN D. BANGAY

A Book of English Idioms, by V. H. Collins (Longmans, 10s. 6d.)

Our daily conversation is consciously or unconsciously packed full of idiomatic sayings, a form of imagery that, although made up of conventional clichés, is illuminating and often racy. So accustomed are we, however, to allusions like 'Letting the cat out of the bag', 'Let sleeping dogs lie,' and 'An axe to grind', that we never stop to enquire their origin. As well as explaining their exact meaning Mr. Collins tells us promptly that the one derives from the divulgence of a trick to sell a non-existent pig in a sack at a fair, the second was 'adumbrated by Chaucer', and the third originated from an incident in the life of Benjamin Franklin. Of course, writers of verse mint their own wealth of imagery for the most part, but their work is enriched by the undercurrent of familiarity with idiomatic English and the colouring that words have gathered from many associations. We all know how a dictionary tempts one to continue browsing after a legitimate consultation, and this one can lead the reader on indefinitely to much useful information and many surprises.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The Charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

'WING YOUR JOY!'

NOTES BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review.)

It is good to know that the poets who are friends of The Poetry Society and whose names are familiar to readers of this periodical are lifting themselves high above a bleak world and winging their joy. The name of John Mendip has become pleasantly recognizable to those who are interested in our Competitions, and on the Editorial table is a copy of his slim volume entitled *The Fugues of Day* which has been published by Wilding of Shrewsbury, though unpriced. Mr. Mendip's gift is a modest one, but his joy in making a poem is apparent in all his eighteen poems. Only in one of them does he show awareness of man's worldly affairs. This is 'Give Me an Unobtrusive Rose', written in another key:–

> Give me an open meadow, whereon no man may build
> A slum estate.

We turn to Terence Heywood and his *Architectonic* (Fortune Press, 7s. 6d.) as to an old acquaintance. This is Mr. Heywood's third book, a poem in six parts with 'interludes'. The author explains his theme as 'war and after', some of the writing being generated in the 'unwholesome excitement of early wartime'. A number of the verses in a most interesting volume stand independently, some of them concerned with a very different period—youth, when 'life was a pure psalm, youthful and exquisite'. John Hoffman, whose latest work is collected in *Thanksgiving*, which has a foreword by Lady Margaret Sackville (Guild Press, 3s. 6d.), uses his pen only to give praise. Everything to him is worthy of it. 'The rose has her secrets'. C. Denis Pegge, another contributor to *The Poetry Review* has his own way of crowning the world with glory. In *The Flying Bird and Other Poems* (Maclellan, Glasgow, 7s. 6d.) he writes about 'the nobility of men. The eye catches from the hedgerows the scents of the flowers. We may love – again and again'. Frederick Bratton, too, accepts life gratefully. *Land of Neaperken* (Fantasma, Worthing, 2s.) is his fifth booklet and includes nineteen welcome songs.

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Othelia Lilly's new book, *Wing Your Joy* is one of a dozen volumes from overseas. The title indicates the spirit of a charming work (Lederer, Street & Zeus, California), poetry being, for her, 'a kind of music that makes the days dance'. *Sonnets of Love and Liberty* by Walter Lowenfels (Blue Heron Press, New York, 1.50 dollars) is sponsored in a sense by no less a fellow-poet than Alfred Kreymborg, who speaks of these sonnets as 'not only timely in our age, but timeless in their meanings and overtones':–

> Is spring April only? Or did the black dove say:
> *Spring is a prison flower, its petals fold*
> *and unfold over the jailed, the burned, the martyred.*

Two volumes, delightfully and worthily produced as usual with Stanton Coblentz the publisher, have come from the Wings Press (California, 2 dollars each): *The Deeper Bond* by Walter Blackstock, and *Frugal Chariot* by Karen Arnold. In both instances the craftsmanship is sound, but the general tone

differs. Miss Arnold writes mainly about love with tenderness and poignancy, but Professor Blackstock ventures further and more widely. It will be interesting to readers of our dedication to Archibald MacLeish in this number of *The Poetry Review* (page 67) that Walter Blackstock describes MacLeish's life-work as 'words of strength and grace', through which 'we try, ourselves, to live the commonplace uncommonly, to see the far as near'. David B. Steinman, in *I Built a Bridge and Other Poems* (Davidson Press, 2 dollars), writes of much that he knows, and he knows very much indeed. He is one of the world's most famous bridge engineers and consultants, and he has turned from a long career of building in the material sense to planning 'a bridge of peace, uniting man', and spanning the world 'the dream for which we fought'. Another poet who writes many kinds of poetry is Louis O. Coxe. In *The Second Man and Other Poems* his range of subjects – and the technique is admirably appropriate – includes men in peril on land and sea, the violence of nature, and love and religion in their moments of vital decision. Religion is dominant in *Shelomo* by Robert K. Rosenburg (Baltimore, unpriced). Eloquence rather than meditative verse-writing is the author's most effective characteristic.

To Othelia Lilly, whose new book is referred to above, we have to give thanks for a pleasant anthology of poems written by members of *The Ina Coolbrith Golden Circle 1955*. There are fifty-nine contributions, some of them by poets whose names are known to us over here, such as that of Margaret Lewis Albanese, and the collection is announced as a tribute to Ina Coolbrith as 'First Poet Laureate of the State of California', with the purpose, we are informed, of carrying on the Californian tradition shared by such famous authors as Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, Jack London, and George Sterling.

South America is represented in our list by a collection submitted from Brazil with a complimentary message to *The Poetry Review*. Our salutations go in return to Alexandre Grabinas, whose *poémas* are entitled *Eu Do Sono*, from which it will be gathered that they are written in a language we do not understand. Across the seven seas we travel for our next book to Australia: *The Birdsville Track*, by Douglas Stewart (Angus & Robertson, Sydney and London, 15s.) and then back to Canada for *Once Upon a Rhyme* by Len G. Selle (Northland Printers, Ontario, 1.25 dollars). These two works reach extremes of adventure and humour.

A distinguished member of this Society has sent from North Africa the second number of *Odu*, a journal of Yaruba and Related Studies, which might usefully be recalled as we read Imogen Whyse's poem elsewhere in this issue. It is a gallant little bi-annual (2s. 6d.) and includes illustrations by a Yaruban artist, and poetry in the Yaruba idiom – 'What a morning, when the air is not filled with the clang of the pounding of yam! What an evening, when I listened in vain to hear them sift the flour!' The prose deals mainly with the Yarubaland mythology; it is a stern corrective for those who believe that a native culture and native beliefs can be immediately extinguished at the command of military and political aliens. 'Can one destroy a belief by calling it a superstition? Can one wipe out an emotion by calling it non-existent?'

Can one go on telling a child that he must brush aside the entire philosophy of his father's as mere superstition?' Such questions, adapted for the convenience of quotation, call for sympathetic answers.

Ruth Gilbert, a New Zealander whose verse is known in this country, has been enabled to publish her first book through a grant from the New Zealand Literary Fund, and *The Sunlit Hour* (Allen & Unwin, 5s.) has justified such national patronage. Traditional in form, simple in technique, her poems have a beauty of their own, and their theme is almost invariably 'the humble things hearts ponder on and keep'. Not quite so humble, but no less simple are the poems of J. C. Grant in *The Flitting* (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.), selected from the author's prize-winning entry for the competition run by the Arts Council during the Festival of Britain, 1951. 'Northumbrian Nocturne' is lengthy and mainly reflective, but it is, from first to last, true narrative poetry.

It is always a pleasure to write about the books of poetry published at The Hand and Flower Press – a pleasure, moreover, to turn their beautifully printed pages. And the poetry is invariably in keeping. *Experiment in Error* by Blanaid Salkeld, *The Return of Ulysses* by Patrick Fernando, and *XXVIII Poems* by Gabriel Fielding, are recent issues (7s. 6d. each): Miss Salkeld's poems have an intimate buoyancy, Mr. Fernando's a quiet sense of narrative, and Mr. Fielding's a homeliness expertly expressed and reminding us of the work (see above) of Ruth Gilbert.

•

The Halcyon Press are to be congratulated on *Poems* by John Travers Moore (14s.), and *A Book of Verse* by B. C. Margheritta (3s. 6d.), not only for their charming appearance but also for their choice of poets. Devotion is the essence of Mr. Moore's verse and a certain mischievousness pervades Mr. Margheritta's. His retort to a modern poet's question –

> Why do you walk in the fields in gloves?
> Oh, fat white woman whom nobody loves –

set us chuckling. From the firm of Arthur Stockwell come six books and booklets, variously priced: *Wings to Rise* by Ellen Bate and *Everyone to His Own Way* by Sophia E. H. Melrose (6s. each); *Sunshine and Shadow* by Margaret Robinson Davey (2s.); *Odds and Ends* by K. R. Sommer-Ford and *The Idyll* by Joan B. Bradfield (1s. 6d. each); and *Annie Laurie: The Story of its Composition* by W. W. Elliot (1s.). A publishing house we have not previously encountered is The Candlelight Press, from which we have received *Drifting Boats*, a joint work by Sidney and Marian Arnold (8s. 6d.) The verses are 'dedicated to the immortal memory of W. B. Yeats, AE, and James Stephens', and the intention is a worthy one. Readers in Wales may be familiar with Tegwen Lewis's poetic contributions to the newspapers of her homeland. *A Singing Mountain Farm* (Brown and Son, Glamorgan, 2s.) will appeal strongly to those who feel wistful about the sounds, sights and movements of nature in meadowland and hillside through the seasons – and especially in the warm and cosy farmhouse kitchen. *Calling all Shipping* by Katherine Minta Garner (Byron Copying Office, Newark, 6s.) is a jolly affair about the 'Saucy Sue'. the 'Mary Ann', the 'Polly', the 'Brighton Belle', and the rest of the sea-lover's mental equipment that, recalled in such verses, causes the reader to mutter

POETRY SOCIETY SPECIAL

THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON FOR MEMBERS AND THEIR FRIENDS

will be held at The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

SATURDAY, 12th MAY, 1956,

at 12.35 for 1.15. This is a Get-Together Luncheon, and applications for Tickets, 15s. each (exclusive of wines), should be made early, as the accommodation is limited.

Accompanied by a remittance, the applications must be addressed to Mrs. T. L. Adamson, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Cheques must be made payable to The Poetry Society.

In accordance with the Licensing Regulations the names and addresses of those who wish to attend, and of their guests also, must accompany their application, which can be made from 1st April onward.

Distinguished Visitors will be present, and the President and the General Council are the official hosts and hostesses.

Ship Ahoy with, for a few minutes, a rolling walk. *Poems* by G. E. B. McWilliam is a little volume without a publisher's name or any price – which includes a group of twenty printed long ago by The Poetry Society. *The Creation* (and other pieces) by the same author maintains the spirit of devotion. Town and gown where the famous dreaming spires are gleaming will flutter afresh when Maida Stanier's collection of topical verses *Culex's Guide to Oxford*, is re-read, most of them having appeared in a local weekly. Miss Stanier has been described by us as one in possession of quality (The Abbey Press, Abingdon, 5s.).

Once upon a time a volume in the Everyman's Library cost one shilling. To-day they cost anything up to seven shillings, and those who are able to pay this increased price will experience no greater thrill when handling the latest reprints than the poor scholar used to have when he had gone short of several meals so that he could acquire the coveted treasure. But to-day's thrill is great all the same, and the following works which originally appeared long ago are now brightening the bookshops with their lively coloured covers: Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (2 vols., 7s. each), Marlowe's *Plays and Poems* (one vol. 7s.), Gray's *Poems* with a selection of letters and essays introduced by John Drinkwater (7s.), Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets* and *The Spirit of the Age* (7s.), and Holinshed's *Chronicle* as used in Shakespeare's plays (6s.). Along with these may be added a new volume in Hutchinson's University Library, *English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century*, by Maurice Evans (8s. 6d.). Finally we acknowledge with appreciation a book on Hans Christian Andersen; his *Life and Work* has been received from the Royal Danish Embassy in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of his birth. Exquisitely produced, this volume covers all Andersen's life and stories and five distinguished Danish scholars have shared the writing of it. *Whitman's Manuscripts*, edited with notes by Fredson Bowers (University of Chicago Press and Cambridge University Press, 94s.), has commemorated the 'Good Grey Poet's' centenary. A superb work, with parallel text and holographs of his autograph writing.

COMPETITIONS FOR EVERYBODY–

READERS AS WELL AS POETS

I - *New and Unique . . .*

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN QUATRAIN CONTEST

Again The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn of New York, well-known to Poets and their readers as a deep lover of Poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial award is offered to Members in any part of the world. Repeat – Members only . . .

A PRIZE OF FIFTEEN POUNDS

is the Award. It will be given for the best Quatrain (a stanza of four rhyming lines). It must be original and previously unpublished.

The judges will be appointed by the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. The manuscript must be neatly typewritten and sent anonymously, with the author's name and address, plus the Membership number, to accompany it in a sealed envelope. No manuscript can be returned. Closing date for the Award is 30th June, 1956.

The outer envelope must be addressed: 'Albert Ralph Korn Quatrain Contest,' The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

II - *For Everybody . . .*

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT COMPETITION
ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES

The Poetry Society has pleasure in presenting the second instalment of a fascinating new *Competition for Poets, Non-Poets, and Readers of Poetry*. We offer – our record figure so far – £100 in Prizes.

No prize will exceed FIFTY POUNDS, and none will be less than TEN POUNDS. The qualities required to win are simple: a love of Poetry, a little Imagination, and a Good Memory. Competitors need never have written a line of verse in their lives!

It is a unique Competition: a long 'poem', not original but invented, built by 'Palgrave Q. Dobree' entirely of LAST LINES FROM KNOWN POEMS. Each line is an authentic quotation, and for the guidance of entrants here is an example. The opening line was: 'To those who dwell in realms of day', and it concludes William Blake's 'Auguries of Innocence'. (See earlier instalment, January-March issue).

We invite readers everywhere to trace the source of as many lines as possible. The winners will be those who give the largest correct number of sources.

The 'poem' will be completed in three issues. Competitors must retain their lists of sources until the serialization is concluded. Instructions for submitting them will then be published, and, as the Competition is world-wide, ample time allowed for the mailing of entries. Meanwhile, make a note of each source and the number of the line. Each tenth line is numbered alongside.

Before the 'poem' is continued (see p. 117, following Competition No. VII), here is an *errata* note, referring to the previous instalment:

Line 78, read *cold* for 'old'. Line 105, read *yet* for 'still'.

Line 23, substitute 'Adoring virtue's distant star' for 'Into hopeless, endless mourning'. (Same poem, same author.)

And through a printing mishap, Line 60 was numbered opposite 61 ('Companions of the Spring').

III – *For Poets under Thirty . . .*

THE MENDIP PRIZE COMPETITIONS: NUMBER TWO

Another generous offer has been made by a Friend of Poetry who wishes to remain anonymous.

A PRIZE OF FOUR POUNDS

will be awarded for a poem by a competitor between seventeen and thirty years of age. The poem must be lyrical with a pastoral theme, and is not to exceed thirty lines.

Reporting on the Award in an earlier competition, Stephen Graham wrote: 'If young people feel something in the English countryside it is right that they should be encouraged to try to express it in poetry. For that reason the donor of The Mendip Prize has made a gesture fully worthwhile.'

The winning poem will be published in *The Poetry Review*, along with the poet's name. The Editorial Board will adjudicate, and entries must be submitted not later than 30th June, 1956. Envelopes to be marked 'Mendip Prize,' and addressed to *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

IV – *Also New, for Everybody*

WHICH? AND WHY?

If you were stranded and alone on a desert island, or if you had a premonition that you were going to be, which one Poem in English literature would you be glad to know by heart? And if you are going to a party, knowing that you may be called upon suddenly to read a great Narrative Poem aloud, which will you choose?

Prizes will be awarded for the selections most attractively supported in not more than fifty words altogether.

The Prizes? Please don't imagine that if you are a winner the award will make you feel (for a moment) like a millionaire, as one or two of those announced above

or below may do. *These awards in this lesser Competition are designed to help members to gain new readers.*

All entries to be sent by May 25th, 1956, to "Which and Why," *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

V – *A Famous Annual*

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1955–56

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of

TWENTY POUNDS

as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed 'The Greenwood Prize', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1956.

VI – *Members and Subscribers only*

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION 27

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed 'Premium Competition', *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize money will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st June, 1956.

VII – *An Old Favourite*

ORIOLE PRIZE, 1956

ORIOLE (a Poets' Group of The Poetry Society) offers an award of

FIVE POUNDS

for the best poem on *The Spirit of Place*. The Competition is open to all; entrance fee 2s. 6d. per entry. Competitors must adopt a pseudonym which should appear in block capitals on the manuscript, and on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address.

Poems will not be returned. The winning poem may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date, 31st July, 1956. Address: Oriole Prize, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

See Competition No. 2

LAST LINES: PART TWO

PALGRAVE Q. DOBREE

Sorry I am, my God, sorry I am
For them that lie forlorn!
The floor lay pav'd with broken hearts
Fallen cold and dead
And return'd to the land of Thought again,
The sweet cheat gone . . .
They have no graves as yet
And yet God has not said a word
And no birds sing
So few birds house!

Therefore that He may raise, the Lord throws down –
For what could fathom God were more than He
Who keeps himself the key
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars
That I shall never find Him
While the eternal ages watch and wait
Till the lamp flickers and the memory fail
Heroic hearts upon our lonely way.

But what does it mean? What are we going to do?
You may for ever tarry
To strive, to seek, to find: and not to yield
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new:
Easy live and quiet die
Between a sleep and a sleep:
Enter neither care nor fear –
But there is no road through the woods,
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet!

The wilderness of this Elysian earth
Is too precise in every part
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell,
Can find no comfort for a broken heart.
And all my pillow was a wetness of tears
And will be, even to the last of his dark departures.

Then the dreadful night shall break
In England's green and pleasant land,
Shall burst the walls and overturn the world:
Here, and in hell
Beyond, is agony,
And the need of a world of men for me
And thou thyself to all eternity
And men coming and going on the Earth . . .

Is the ending of my song
Not of itself but thee –
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes?
'Tis easy to be true
And love thee more and more,
But holy Death is kinder
When all is ruin once again:
And I was unaware
And haply may forget
The difference to me
Of other days around me
(Even now – even now – even now
Forgotten more profoundly? . . .
Say nay ! say nay!)

Go as gently as you came
(It is always best to take everything as it comes
Nor feel the heartbreak in the heart of things):
Take all the rest the sun goes round
That are so wondrous sweet and fair,
But not another's hope
Anticipating life, to hasten death.
  Watchful sorrows charm'd in sleep
Can never break in vain
Where *it* will break at last
That will not perish in the dust
And blossom in purple and red
(Smell sweet and blossom in their dust)
As when a queen, long dead, was young
And closed her up as in a tomb
But no-one knows where she inhabits now
And gaze aghast on her new strange queenhood:
  Virtue dies with too much rest
Like a stripp'd child fain in the sea to dip –
Bird that was shot ne'er dropt so quick as he
And his overthrow our chorus
Lying like broken sticks among the stones
With all manner of rubbish and all manner of lies,
And inaccessible as Dido's phantom
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

*

But westward, look, the land is bright! . . .
As long ago, my love – how long ago –
Love will find out the way
To be the victim for mankind,
To draw a brother to his side
And night shall fold him in soft wings.
Let the harmonious spheres in music roll
And a Man with his back to the East

Come sounding through the town,
Come home again – come home again,
Home once more! –
And kept His faith with God, and He will reign
Whom thou art sworn to obey
Alone, beyond the crack of doom
When *Finis* comes. 209

(*To be continued*)

LATEST PRIZE REPORTS AND AWARDS

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE AWARD 1955

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

It is both challenging and inspiring to receive nearly two hundred poems from all over the world. Few of them lacked a true poetic impulse or were marred by aberrations of scansion or language, but many revealed a want of stamina to maintain an initial excellence or a flagging imagination in phrase or epithet; and after several sessions of enthralling reading I was left with fifteen finalists, still drawn from a wide range of counties and countries, joined by a common thread of poetry. So differing were they, however, in theme, style, form and metre that there came into play that one intangible yet vital consideration; the appeal of a poem which is the compound of all its virtues, its indefinable power to stir evocatively the heart and mind.

From my finalists, therefore, and on these grounds I award the prize to Margaret Stanley-Wrench for her poem of adoration and praise, "Kalendar." The poise and flow of her unrhymed lines, with rhymed passages discerningly interpolated, bespeak a mastery in an elusive form. Her imagery is quiet yet fresh and perceptive, and there is a controlled passion and sincerity, mounting to a paean of praise, that captures and holds.

Many of the others had delights of their own. 'The Hour of Visiting', in which A. V. Stuart, by adroit cutting and delicate atmospheric language, tells in Scottish ballad metre a rare eldritch tale; 'Song of a Barren Woman', by Marilyn Duckworth, who, with an originality of metaphor, in a free style that might be tautened with advantage, reports the anguish of one deserted; and H. E. Platt's 'Return To Persia', which vividly portrays, in a similar mode, his emotions in quest of 'the simplicity that dares alone outlive desolation'. Also there were Carla Lanyon Lanyon's 'G.T., on his Fiftieth Birthday', a short, restricted, but finely rhymed and integrated poem of review and vindication; 'The Magic Ammonite', by Juanita Peirse, profoundly concerned with cosmic inference and wonder; and 'The Gem of Bhava Ghat', by A. E. Dodds, a ballad of princely bravura and charm.

America, not to be outdone, contributed five poems to the final group; the stylish and ornamented 'The Unconceived' by Margaret Lewis Albanese of California, that rivalled the 'Song of the Barren Woman' in perception; 'Mercy Is God's' by Hannah Kahn of Florida which resolves, with strength, the dilemma of a doctor faced with suffering and the incurable; a laughing

Provençal lyric, 'To Love the Girls I Lost', by Otto S. Wagner of New Mexico, a Browningesque self-dramatization; 'Second Sitting', by Margaret Waley Carpenter of Virginia; and 'Encounter in Eden' by Frederika Blankner, New York, with beauty of subjective understanding of adult love.

My select fifteen were completed by three poems from the Commonwealth: 'A Dreamer in the Forest', by Clive R. Bridgman of Cape Province, which tells, with a melody of words, a fantasy of pilgrimage and purgation; 'Rhodesian Day' by Daphne M. Child, singing of the strange beauty, the loneliness and adventure of her unique country; and, from New South Wales, 'The March of the Otters', a narrative poem in controlled blank verse by which L. E. Cragie sends back to England one of the loveliest of its legends.

And so the prize goes to Margaret Stanley-Wrench – leader in a notable parade. We hope to print 'Kalendar' in a future number.

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT 26

ARTHUR VIVIAN BURBURY

An exceedingly difficult set of entries confronted the Adjudicator. There were as usual a number of poems which announced at once Here Am I, Here is Promise, Here is Poetry; but none which announced *Here is the Real Thing, Here is a Winner.* Out of thirty-three entries four poems of similar merit seemed to be possible sharers of the prize: considerable heart-searching and brain-washing were needed before two of them could be selected to tie for first place.

So often it is through some fault of syntax or sequence or rhythm that a poem does not succeed. It would be valuable to point these out to the poet, but space and tact forbid. It is not enough to make a pretty picture or image and 'lug God in for the last line'.

Commendation is due to A. Sloan for 'Portrait of a Poet' as a specimen of the modern informalism, and Rowena Lamy, of Rustington, Sussex, for 'Exile'. Marguerite Munson's brief 'Old Gramophone Record', submitted from Hull: Alice Yardley's 'Winter Music' from Nottinghamshire: 'Single mind', by Ann Bogor (Salisbury): 'The Gift' by Rita Spurr (London): Ilse Zuidema (Cape Town) with 'To a Modern Poet' has the Roy Campbell touch and the Colonial irony: 'Watching the Waters' by Ruth Partington: 'Castle of My Youth' by Enid M. Jones (Denbigh): 'Funeral Dirge' by Elizabeth Drury: 'Backyard Mending' by Frances Garland (Heysham, Lancashire); and 'Old Women Weeping' by Mrs. I. A. Cavenaugh – each of these has a poetic interest in its own right.

A special word goes also to Aileen Elsmore (Hatch End) for 'Summer Passing': Josephine Ogle (London) 'Hiatus': Elsie Wootton (Northwood) 'The Jungfrau': Helen Punch (Fermoy, County Cork), 'Alpha and Omega' – small child by old man's coffin: Muriel Woodward (Nottingham) 'Values' – beautifully contrasted – and Philip Martin (Newcastle-on-Tyne) for 'Flung Stone.' The runners-up were Mrs. J. Phoenice (Berwick-on-Tweed) with 'Stones', and Dorothy Howard (Sheffield) with 'Knifesmith'.

And finally the winners were Joyce Evelegh of Canterbury, with her 'Transfiguration', and Pamela Cleaver (Kensington) with 'Sea Wrack'. We shall include them in the next issue.

THE HAND & FLOWER PRESS

★

EXPERIMENT IN ERROR
by Blanaid Salkeld
7s. 6d.

THE RETURN OF ULYSSES
by Patrick Fernando
7s. 6d.

XXVIII POEMS
by Gabriel Fielding
7s. 6d.

SOME POEMS
by Erica Marx
7s. 6d.

★

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Write for full details – enclosing if possible an ms. for consideration and, if suitable, you will receive a free quotation. You will be under no obligation.

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★ *Overseas inquiries particularly welcomed.*

An Anthology of New Zealand Verse

Selected by ROBERT CHAPMAN *and* JONATHAN BENNETT

This new anthology of 273 selections from 44 poets surveys the development of New Zealand poetry from its beginning a century ago. The greater part of the volume consists of work published between the wars but the inclusion of poems by Alfred Domett, Jessie Mackay, William Pember Reeves, Hubert Church and other pioneers gives it a particular interest as the first anthology to trace the evolution and definition of a New Zealand idiom in poetry. 21*s. net* (*12 April*)

A Book of Australian Verse

Selected by JUDITH WRIGHT

This selection, with emphasis on the poetry of the past thirty years, is edited by a major Australian poet. It is a stimulating collection, the vigour and quality of which may well come as a surprise to readers in other countries. 15*s. net* (*June*)

The Source and other Poems

By KATHERINE WATSON

'Miss Watson . . . is a difficult poet (in that these poems must be read several times to yield their full content), although not "difficult" in the modish sense. Rather she harks back to Hopkins, with whom she reveals a close kinship, both in temperament and in the use of sprung rhythm . . . . Miss Watson has succeeded in the difficult task of speaking in an intensely personal voice of the oldest mysteries, and the result is often very moving.' *Times Literary Supplement.* 8*s.* 6*d. net*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

FRIDAY EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

Everybody welcome. Admission 1s., Non-Members and Reserved Seats 2s. 6.30 to 7.30 approx.

April	20	'How Modern is Modern Poetry?' Illustrated Talk by R. N. CURREY. Chairman: The President, THOMAS MOULT.
	27	'Hamlet,' from a woman's point of view. With illustrations by ESME and VERA BERINGER.
May	4	A. E. COPPARD reads His Own Poems and Stories with JUNE FRANKLIN. Chairman: The President.
	11	Ladies' Night. With JANE CAMPBELL, MARY GILES, JOYCE SAGAR, ODETTE TCHERNINE. Chairman: KATHLEEN V. RICHARDSON.
	18	'The Arthurian Legends.' Poems by Tennyson, Swinburne, Arnold, Robert S. Hawker ('of Morwenstow'). Arranged by T. L. ADAMSON.
	25	CLIFFORD TURNER reads his Favourite Poems.
June	1	JOHN SMITH. Poet in Person, reading from His Own Works with KELTY MACLEOD. Chairman: THOMAS MOULT.
	8	'Explorations in Modern Poetry.' A Reading arranged by MOLLIE HUDSON.
	15	JOHN G. WILSON. 'A Bookseller Talking.' Chairman: LOUIS GOLDING.
	22	MARGARET RAWLINGS reads from Her Personal Anthology. Chairman: JOHN GRADDON.
	29	KENNEDY WILLIAMSON. 'The Verb in Poetry.' An illustrated talk. CONSTANCE MACCOLL in the Chair.
July	6	'Any Questions?' Panel: DALLAS KENMARE, F. PRATT GREEN, ALUN LLEWELLYN, W. KEAN SEYMOUR. Arranged by ROBERT ARMSTRONG. Members are asked to submit their questions in good time.
	13	Audience Night. Members of the audience are invited to read their own or favourite poem (limit, three minutes). Chairman: CHARLES DORAN.

The next Gold Medal Examination will be held at 33 Portman Square on 29th May, 7 p.m.

PORTMAN SQUARE – WHEN ICICLES HANG

'Packed out!' is becoming not only our weekly slogan but quite a pressing problem to which *Come early* seems the only answer. In spite of 'flu, burst pipes, restricted transport and lowered gas-pressure, the audience-graph for 1956 continues to soar beyond the norm of many years back. To be able to offer such audiences to our distinguished guests leads to more distinguished guests, so let's keep it up!

A very important aspect of the Society's activities concerns its Verse Speaking examinations and auditions, and on January 6th, the entire day was given up to the annual Teachers' Conference. After a morning of discussion between adjudicators and teachers, Miss Winifred Kingdon-Ward spoke to the afternoon gathering about Speech Therapy with the clarity and authority born of ripened knowledge and understanding.

After a pause for tea with the President, the conference was visited informally by Margaret Rawlings and Richard Church who were to set the seal on the day when the company joined the crowd of Friday-nighters to hear Mr. Church on Three Stages of Creative Impulse, with readings from his own work interpreted *con amore* by Margaret Rawlings. Afterwards, 'Lovely evening!' was heard in the Hall: 'Lovely audience!' in the Green Room. Lovely Society!

On the following Friday, Archdeacon Adam Fox (with F. Pratt Green in the Chair) stood up for the English narrative genius in an unpedagogic talk which conveyed with deceptive ease all the wisdom of a former Oxford Poetry Professor (Old Style)

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and all the freshness of a richly stored mind. He read Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* and a long extract from Wordsworth's *Excursion* in illustration. On January 20th, Wilton Cole and Charles Doran, each of whom can fill the Library to overflowing, together provided Robert Browning, *Cuivée Imperials*. Mr. Cole's "Last Duchess" and "The Pied Piper" and Mr Doran's "Roses, Roses" and "Love Among the Ruins" intoxicated the listeners to cheers.

January 27th was Mickiewicz Night (*Mitzkievitz*, please), and to honour the centenary of the Polish laureate, Chopin's contemporary, Jack Lindsay, accomplished translator and essayist on Russian literature, gave a talk of such interest that it is to reappear soon in these pages. The Readers were Michael Howley, Alan Phillips, Ruth Green and Kim Corcoran, and Vivian Burbury was in the chair.

On the next Friday Robert Armstrong, assisted by John Wakeman, scooped the pool with some Dylan Thomas recordings made in America shortly before the poet's tragic end. Preceded by a brief biography, which, without gloze, gave a picture of the whole man that pleased both enthusiast and sceptic.

To hear the Classics extolled as a means toward elasticity of mind by one who is a living witness to the truth of that theory; add to this, imaginative and provocative ideas on poetic form, illustrated by shapely reading, and you have spent an hour with one of the great figures of our time – C. B. Fry, Captain of all he surveys. Supporting shipmaids were Romayne Forsyth and Mary Ainsworth, and the President was Chairman.

Poets appearing In Person, introduced by Alec Craig, on February 17th were Peter Redgrove, Iain Fletcher and Christine Brook-Rose. Despite the *Defence of Non-Poesie* which heralded them, the missiles launched proved to be poems of substance and power. Since the intricacies of contemporary works can hardly be mastered at one hearing, interested followers-up may like to have the titles of the longer poems so effectively read: *Prelude and History* (Peter Redgrove): *The Island of Reil* (Christine Brook-Rose): *An Ode: Variant on Lord Herbert's* (Iain Fletcher), and two pieces from Alec Craig's lately published volume, *The Prometheans*. Next, Stuart Holroyd, having detected more than one Major Theme in modern poetry (this, in itself, rather an achievement) analysed his discoveries with illustrations by June Franklin, Michael Howley and John Dodds. On March 2nd, Sir Francis Meynell enchanted us with memories of a literary Happy Family; in particular, of his greatly gifted mother, Alice Meynell. A few charming poems of his own rounded off this quite magical but too short hour. Before he spoke, Mr. A. E. Tomlinson read his winning poem in the Crabbe bicentenary contest, two of the three judges having been Sir Francis and our President. K.V.R.

WORK IN PROGRESS AT THE CENTRES

BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

Not always in the way that our Centres conduct their weekly or monthly gatherings is originality to be commended. But originality during the Talk or Reading is invariably welcome. Occasions arise when the proceedings are suddenly illuminated by something *different*, and worth putting on record.

It is fitting that we should turn to the Friday evenings at headquarters for recent examples. The Readings and Talks by Sir Alfred Munnings and Captain C. B. Fry departed so markedly from the ordinary that they are worth a special note – and for a brief detail or so see our usual reports (by 'K.V.R.') from Portman Square. There have also been times when the Poetry Hour is illuminated by a novel feature, incidental to the main programme, such as that which Miss Roberta Shuttleworth gave last year.

On the speaker's table to illustrate her subject, which concerned the

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POETRY SECTION

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THE POETRY SOCIETY

Founded 24th February, 1909 :: Incorporated 18th June, 1923

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary,
General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
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I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

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'magic carpet' of Poetry, lay some of the exquisite sea-shells which Miss Shuttleworth collects as a hobby and to which she drew the attention of a fascinated audience. Especially were they fascinated by the pearly-tinted Nautilus variety, surely the first concept of the Ivory Tower analogy, as Miss Odette Tchernine has suggested, 'because the living creature inside the shell remains concealed from birth to death.' Appropriately through this the lecturer illustrated Tennyson's poem, 'The Sea-Shell'.

Lecturers who are inclined to be conventional in their talks and readings at our Centres please note.

NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA)

'Golden hours of vision come to us, in this present life, when we are at our best, and our faculties work together in harmony'. These words came to Miss Mildred Atwood as she summed up a year's association and work at this, one of the premier Centres of Canada. It was a splendid year, with the publication of their third annual *Chap Book* as its crowning achievement. The general opinion about this new volume over there was that it contained poems whose quality had greatly improved.

There was also a successful Poetry Contest for provincial High Schools. One of the most memorable of recent lectures was given by Mr. Douglas Lockhead, who left us with a vivid word-picture of Dylan Thomas. Then in the friendly flower-bordered home of Mr. and Mrs. Shields an illustrated lecture on the relation of Art and Poetry was delivered by Professor Mowatt. Finally the officials wish to put on record the anniversary dinner in March. Enquiries about this Centre should be made to 116 Allen Street, Halifax, N.S., Canada.

BOSTON (U.S.A.)

Mrs. Blanche T. Bigelow, Hon. Secretary of this Massachusetts branch, has been ill, and from London a sympathetic greeting goes out to her with the hope that she has made a complete recovery. In her absence Mr. J. Wieners and Miss J. Addison presided at the anniversary party given by Mrs. Eleanora Curtis, who read her essay comparing Dylan Thomas, Christopher Fry, and Robert Frost. A Wellesley College lady, very interested in poetry, came to the aid of Mrs. Curtis during her preparation for this, the twenty-seventh annual occasion of its kind. The Hon. Secretary's address is 163 Eliot Street, Milton 87, Mass., U.S.A.

VANCOUVER (CANADA)

A message from Miss Irene H. Moody who has lately retired from active work at this venerable Canadian Centre: 'Please accept our warm appreciation for the New Year's message in *The Poetry Review*. We felt so happily at home with our wonderful 'Mother,' and send you our greetings and the finest of all good wishes for the years ahead.' As we have already announced, Mrs. George Maharg, 754 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. is now the official contact.

SUFFOLK

New ideas that may be practicable for the Centres will always be thankfully announced in these notes, and a Portfolio Scheme is being organized at our enterprising East Anglian Centre. An invitation is going out to members for them to contribute poems which will be circulated in MS by post to other members on a mailing list. Criticism is asked for before they are sent to the next on the rota. The scheme is primarily for the use of members who are unable to attend the monthly meetings. Miss Kay Turner, The Hon. Secretary (1 Willoughby Road, Ipswich) had the pleasure of successfully persuading Mr. A. E. Tomlinson of Lowestoft to travel to London to read his winning poem in the George Crabbe Contest at a Friday reading by Sir Francis Meynell on March 2nd at Portman Square.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

'Our membership is steadily increasing,' writes Mr. P. E. Dunn the president of

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The Gen. Sec., The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

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The Poetry Review

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this Centre which, he adds, 'might well be called the Sussex Poetry Society, since members visit us from Burgess Hill, Seaford, Hassocks and even Goring-by-Sea.'

The Centre meets on the third Saturday of each month in Guildry House, Marine Parade, Brighton. A visit from Mr. Kennedy Williamson of the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review* was very welcome: he delivered a most interesting address on the use of the epithet in poetry. Mr. Dunn gave a talk on John Clare and read from his writings. In November a great favourite returned – the Rev. F. Pratt Green with a talk given in his usual amusing and pithy manner on some pitfalls, including sentimentality, the cliché, and imitation. In February a talk on Phoebe Hesketh was given by Mrs. Pettit; and readings from Byron's works by the Burgess Hill Centre and a paper on George Herbert by Mr. Ralph Lawrence followed in March and April.

It is with deep regret that the Centre records the passing of one of its most enthusiastic members, the gallant-spirited Miss A. Pennethorne, after a long illness that never interfered with her attendance at the meetings.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

Rainer Maria Rilke and our own Rudyard Kipling: these were the subjects of two delightful lectures during the winter. Mr. Best dealt with Kipling's life and work, and Mr. Manford Belmore spoke about the German Poet to a large and intensely interested audience, as we have already reported. The Centre meets on the third Thursday of each month and Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, the Hon. Secretary, asks that all enquiries shall be sent to 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, as usual.

KENSINGTON

This Centre suffered a crippling loss by the deaths of its Hon. President, that distinguished actress and teacher Eileen Thorndike (Mrs. Ewbank), and of the Founder's wife, Edith Burbury, a fine judge of a poem, and the Centre's usual hostess. Other losses were Scots-born Morlich Mackay, widowed by the Titanic disaster long ago, and Janny Estbjerg Read, many years well-known at "33" and since his Swedish childhood a friend of the Founder. He and the Hon. Treasurer (Mrs. Gregory) represented the Centre, joining at the funeral an only son, Brigadier E. E. Read, C.B.E., M.C.

By unanimous vote the Presidency was offered jointly to Eileen Thorndike's actress daughters, Elizabeth and Sybil, who graciously agreed to let us retain that famous name both for the Centre and the linked but independent branch of the British Empire Shakespeare Society, meeting alternately some ten months of the year. They gave us the *Othello* meeting of the "B.E.S.S." in their own home.

For Directory of Centres, see previous issue.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., on Wednesday, 23rd May, 1956, at 3.0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than 4th April, 1956, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after 30th April. – By Order of the Council.